NALP

JD Career Advisors Section,
CSO Employer Outreach Work Group

EMPLOYER OUTREACH BEST PRACTICES GUIDE

Created through a collaborative effort of the JD Career Advisors Section,
CSO Employer Outreach Work Group.

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THIS GUIDE HAS BEEN A COLLABORATIVE EFFORT OF THE

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Introduction

To succeed in this world, you have to be known to people. —Sonia Sotomayor

As the legal recruiting market continues to evolve, employer outreach has become increasingly vital to law school career services offices. Fewer permanent offers are coming from summer experiences and traditional on-campus interviews. Given this shifting reality, it is critical for law schools to become proficient at developing employer relationships. These relationships will lead to more formal and informal recruiting and will also create a network of professionals that can help students navigate law school and the career development process.

In addition, by building and maintaining a large employer network, the career services office is better able to keep a pulse on employment trends. This information is invaluable in allowing us to craft our programs to maximize student employability and to share this information with faculty as they explore curricular needs in a changing profession.

Although some law schools have dedicated staff time and resources to employer outreach in a formal manner, most have not. For most law school career services offices, employer outreach requires a significant and specific allocation of staff time and budgets.

To assist law schools in navigating this important transition, NALP created a work group within the section of JD advising to identify employer outreach best practices. This guide is intended to give offices the nuts and bolts of employer outreach so they can integrate it into their strategic planning.

Staffing Models

CHAPTER 1

I am convinced that nothing we do is more important than hiring and developing people. At the end of the day you bet on people, not on strategies.—Larry Bossidy

Staff members in a law school career services office carry multiple responsibilities. We are asked to provide our students with programming to prepare them for the job search, offer networking opportunities to meet employers, organize on-campus interviews and market our job boards, and meet with what seems like an ever-increasing number of students and alumni in personal career counseling sessions. There is also the never-ending employment outcome reporting that is time consuming and detail-oriented work. With so many demands on career services professionals, it is easy to let less-concrete tasks such as increasing employer relationships fall through the cracks, particularly when there is no immediate deadline for completing that project.

If you have a large staff, you may be fortunate enough to work with a colleague who is specifically tasked with employer outreach as part of their job description. For instance, some NALP members were hired specifically for this purpose and they dedicate either a majority of their time or all of their time to this activity. On the other hand, some of our NALP colleagues work in very small or solo career services offices. If you are the only career services staff member, then you know exactly who will be conducting employer outreach — and doing everything else. However, most of us work in offices with a mid-size staff with everyone sharing in multiple responsibilities.

Below are five examples of how different schools manage employer outreach/employer relations.

OPTION 1:
EVERYONE IN THE CSO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR EMPLOYER OUTREACH

Employer outreach in this option does not have a single point person, but is handled by all CSO staff members.

Pros: Allows the office to benefit from everyone's individual contacts and also promotes teamwork. It can also aid in information sharing and collaboration.

Cons: Requires a lead person to ensure current employer outreach needs of the office are being met. Without a lead person some important employer contacts may be missed.

Case Study

At Law School A, employer outreach is the responsibility which seems to get continuously short changed. Each individual staff member will tell you how vitally important it is, yet finding the time to build and maintain a network can be tough. The danger is that they will start providing their students with great advice about their own networks without following that same advice themselves. In other words, they want students to do what we say, but not what we do.

For a period of time this law school assumed that everyone in the office was responsible for employer outreach. They had lively staff meetings where they enthusiastically decided that they did indeed need to do employer outreach. The CSO staff members were all in alignment on this issue. They even got so far as identifying a list of target employers to visit and stay in contact with. However, since they were all carrying several other responsibilities and with no one leading the charge on this particular activity, their lofty aspirations did not get implemented.

OPTION 2:
ONE STAFF MEMBER HANDLES OUTREACH EFFORTS ALONG WITH OTHER CSO RESPONSIBILITIES

Employer outreach in this option is handled by one designated staff member in the CSO office.

Pros: Because employer outreach is the responsibility of one CSO staff person, outreach actually happens. Also, this person is able to conduct consistent follow up with employers as needed. Solid relationships are built.

Cons: The CSO staff person leading this charge is out of the office, often making it difficult for them to be connected with students. The other CSO staff members may miss the opportunity to learn about the needs of these employers. A lot of reporting is required for this model to thrive. Information sharing is imperative so that important employer information is not missed.

Case Study

At Law School B, the director of the office decided to be in charge of employer outreach. She planned to take one day out of the office per week to meet with employers. And when the students were taking finals and at the beginning of the summer, she scheduled to be out of the office twice per week. The director enthusiastically drafted a list of target employers and looked forward to lunches out of the office, attending multiple networking events and getting to know alumni and friends of the university better. Things started off well. Once she got a few meetings scheduled, which required travel throughout the San Francisco Bay Area, she experienced several challenges and came to the realization that this model was not sustainable for the director of the department.

The director found that spending an entire day away from campus was challenging. During the school year it necessitated rescheduling multiple meetings with other law school administrators and university employees who all had busy schedules as well. As a result, the school year calendar went from being action packed to out of control. She was not able to meet with as many students as she previously had in previous years and, as a result, was not acquainted with as many of them. Because she spent the bulk of every day in meetings, her email inbox also started to look like an untamed monster. Additionally, while she met a number of employers, other staff members did not have that opportunity. As a result, when she was contacted by an employer with whom she had been networking about an employment opportunity, her personal interactions and knowledge of the student body were more limited. And when she shared employer requests with other staff members, they needed a lot of information to understand the employer's culture, environment and needs.

OPTION 3:
ALL CSO STAFF MEMBERS SHARE IN OUTREACH ACTIVITIES WITH ONE STAFF MEMBER LEADING THE EFFORT

Employer outreach in this option is shared among all CSO staff members, with one designated CSO staff person leading the charge.

Pros: This method approaches employer outreach as "relationship networking" in that the relationships are genuinely created and preserved. There's sincerity in the outreach and a "how can we help you" mindset.

This option leverages the fact that all CSO staff members have existing employer relationships. By allowing staff members to maintain these relationships, employers feel more connected to the law school and more comfortable with their contact. By effectively skipping the first step in the employer relationship development process, your office can develop productive relationships more quickly. This model also allows a distribution of the employer outreach workload. By allowing staff to share the responsibility, you may find that you are able to maintain a greater number of employer relationships.

Cons: Without a defined process, new target employers may slip through the cracks. Although all staff members share responsibility in this model, the lead person has an important role in developing the employer outreach strategy. This lead person must coordinate the other members' efforts to assure that they intentionally focus on employers that match the goals of the student body. This is particularly important in newer law schools without long-standing recruiting relationships.

Case Study

In Law School C, the staff handles employer outreach, although there is one person who wears the Employer Relations hat. Everybody is involved in the outreach so there's not a defined process. They approach employer relations as relationship networkers. Individual staff members conduct their outreach in their area of expertise (e.g., judges, large law firms, and corporate outreach). Their philosophy is based on building relationships to promote their school — not just solely on one event (OCI) or programs. At this school, roles are spread so that employer outreach is part of everyone's role — not just one person. More people care about the relationships being built.

OPTION 4:
ONE STAFF MEMBER EXCLUSIVELY FOCUSED ON OUTREACH WITH LITTLE OR NO STUDENT CONTACT

Employer outreach in this option is handled by one CSO staff member who does not typically counsel students. This model is gaining momentum in law schools. While some law schools, particularly in the Northeast, have had employer outreach people here and there, it seems that now this role has become widely popular. This model makes sense because often the skill set for counseling students is quite different than the skill set for employer outreach.

The employer outreach staff member has the sole duty to create and maintain employer relationships. Most do not counsel students or only in some limited cases. This staff member is likely out of the office much of the time, meeting with employers in person. For schools with a more national breadth, this person may travel fairly widely to meet employers. The employer outreach staff member is also responsible for working with the counselors to give them the intelligence about the employers and markets that they need for their student counseling.

Pros: Focusing solely on employer relations allows you to do exactly that. Removing counseling responsibilities allows the staff member to direct most, or even all, of their time to employer relations.

Cons: Much less student contact means less of a connection with students, which can often be helpful when talking to employers about hiring and jobs, etc. The other CSO staff members may miss the opportunity to learn about the needs of these employers. A lot of reporting is required for this model to thrive. Information sharing is imperative so that important employer information is not missed.

Case Study

At Law School D, there is a dedicated staff person, the employer relations specialist, whose sole duties are identifying new markets and employer outreach. The position does not involve student or alumni counseling. This specialist initiates and develops relationships with employers, to develop internship and permanent employment opportunities for students and alumni. She conducts a large number of in-person meetings, follows trends in the legal community, and, as a result, generates a large number of employment listings. She also implements the school's mock interview and alumni/student mentor programs. There is also regular collaboration with faculty, administration, and alumni on employment initiatives. This model works well for this school, where there is a high level of collaboration within the office to develop programs and opportunities.

OPTION 5:
EMPLOYER OUTREACH IS HANDLED IN COLLABORATION WITH THE CSO OFFICE AND THE ALUMNI ADVANCEMENT/DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

The advancement/development office has regular contacts with employers/alumni who are active supporters of the law school. At the same time, the CSO staff takes equal responsibility in making connections with employers and actively seeks collaboration with faculty as well.

Pros: The CSO staff and faculty are more closely in touch with students than the advancement office, thereby allowing the CSO to make connections between employers and students.

Cons: Information sharing is imperative. If the advancement/development office does not implement a way of sharing contacts with the CSO, a lot of employer connections can be lost. Also, outreach efforts may be duplicated.

Case Study

At Law School E, the main employer outreach charge is led by this school's advancement/development office in collaboration with the CSO staff members. For smaller law school CSOs, this model of cross-department collaboration is crucial. The major reason that this model works at this school is because of the natural flow for the advancement/development office to lead employer outreach efforts. The advancement/development office is consistently connected with alumni who are friends of the law school and are creating relationships in the outside world. In the CSO, the recruiting coordinator establishes relationships with employers through job postings and the on-campus interview programs. At this law school, the director and career advisor handle less employer outreach but are expected to attend networking events and talk to employers on the phone, which creates contacts and connections with employers. Faculty regularly receives job posting notices due to their contacts and connections and they freely share information with the CSO. Because of faculty involvement, this school recently created a Faculty Career Opportunity Group, where faculty and the CSO director work together to focus on particular practice areas that each faculty member is involved in. These groups encourage the sharing of ideas on how to get student jobs, update contact information, and report any job postings they collect.

Know Your Strengths

CHAPTER

2

A REALISTIC ASSESSMENT OF YOUR SCHOOL'S STRENGTHS FROM THE EMPLOYER'S PERSPECTIVE

"WHY SHOULD I HIRE STUDENTS FROM YOUR SCHOOL?"

This is likely the most important question on the mind of potential new employers during your first meeting with them. Given the current economic market, employers have their choice of law schools to recruit from. Most of them already have existing formal or informal relationships with other schools, or have historically chosen not to hire new graduates. Given this reality, it is critical that you be able to express the specific reasons that *your* students would be attractive to their organization. For example:

1. **Strengths or New Developments in Your Curriculum:** You should know the areas in which your school is viewed as a leader. Is it a clinic? A particular subject matter or specialty? A renowned faculty member or dean? Have you recently expanded your offerings in a certain field? A strong reputation in a specific substantive area of the law can go a long way toward opening doors to new employers and can assist you in identifying those who would be willing to meet with you. However, be careful not to stress these strengths too heavily if they *do not* fall within an employer's focus; otherwise, they may feel the rest of your curriculum and training that *is* relevant to them is not as strong.

2. **Strong Skills Programs:** If your school is known for developing exceptional litigators, focus on employers that want practice-ready attorneys who can walk into a courtroom on day one. An exceptional writing program will be attractive to just about anyone. Robust clinical programs often illustrate your students' commitment to public interest work, a key component in legal aid or public defense hiring. If your law review is well-regarded, or your moot court teams always do well, be sure to make employers aware of this.

3. **School Prestige/Ranking:** Particularly for larger firms, school ranking is still an important part of the recruiting equation. However, often even these employers will entertain applications from the top two or three graduates from lower-ranked schools. If these students do well, they can open doors for other graduates. When meeting with these

employers, be prepared to "sell" your top students' accomplishments, or mention other top firms that have hired your "best" in recent years. Nothing pushes a lawyer like competition! It is also very important to know your audience. Some employers are extremely loyal to a regional or state school, and might view an outsider from a highly-ranked school as "defective" in some way (i.e., "why can't they find a job somewhere else?"), or think that the student simply wants to use their office as a stepping stone. Explain to these employers why their firm is attractive to your students, and why they should be given a chance.

4. "**Soft" Factors:** In addition to school ranking, there are numerous intangible factors that employers rely on when deciding where to recruit. Does your student body have a reputation for being practice ready? Is your school known for its emphasis on developing young professionals in a supportive environment? Do your graduates quickly obtain leadership positions within their communities? Does your affiliated college/university have a large alumni contingent (i.e., potential client base) in the employer's area? These are all factors that should be highlighted to new employers. Large capital funding donations or other high-profile support can illustrate your school's prestige within the community. (Development/fundraising folks are also great sources of information regarding successful alumni.) Also, perhaps the organization has senior or former members with great reputations who are alumni of your school. Be sure to point out that while the employer may focus on particular types of students from certain schools now, your graduates have been extremely successful with them in the past.

5. **Logistical Considerations:** Your office should offer as many options as possible to the employer for meeting with and recruiting students. Numerous on-campus recruiting dates through the year, resume collections, video interviews and web-conferencing, and chances to meet outside regular business hours are all ways you can show employers you appreciate their time and attention. Follow up with them soon and often, and take any feedback seriously. This may mean doing different things for different employers. So be it.

6. **Possible Barriers:** Take a close look at things that may turn off a new employer. Does your school have a non-traditional grading policy? Do they curve in such a way that your students' GPAs seem lower than those from other schools? Letters of explanation from registrars or faculty committees can help with these issues. Does your academic calendar or summer program affect students' availability for summer internships? See if the employers would be willing to hire students for shorter periods, and be sure to mention the problem to your dean.

7. **Marketing Materials:** Some employers really like "swag" — free gifts with the school name/logo. Others — especially recruiting coordinators who meet with several schools a year — have boxes of the stuff in their office that are never touched. It might be better to simply provide them with a brochure, folder, or other print material that they can easily file and reference later.

   Each employer will look at such items differently. If they are not an alum, they may not want a mug, T-shirt, or umbrella with another school's name on it. On the other hand, items like ice scrapers, sewing kits, and lint brushes are quite functional and are not meant to be displayed.

Alumni or other long-time loyal employers might appreciate gifts of greater substance. Obviously, your office budget will play a huge role in this decision, but think twice before investing in massive quantities of one item to save money, lest you find yourself giving the same employer the same gift over and over again. Marketing and public relations offices can be extremely helpful in this area, and can often recommend other offices within the school —alumni relations, admissions — that would be willing to split costs with you.

8. **YOU!!!:** When it comes to recruiting new employers, you are often your school's greatest asset. If employers like you and find you easy to work with, they are far more likely to be interested in your students. Get to know them and teach them about your students. Don't get discouraged if the first two or three times an employer comes to your school do not result in a hire; the important thing is that they came! Keep the relationship going, and mention to other new employers how interest in your school is growing!

CHAPTER

3

Student Preferences

If you don't know where you are going, every road will get you nowhere. — Henry Kissinger

In addition to budget and time constraints, the geographic and practice area preferences of your student population often will drive your employer outreach. Unfortunately, when students begin law school, they may know very little about the types of legal or law-related jobs and specialties that are available. Initially it is important for students to obtain some kind of practical legal experience their 1L summer, but as they get closer to graduation, they should focus their career development efforts on areas that they are interested in and qualified for, and where they have opportunities. However, before students even begin any type of job search, they need to engage in some self-assessment exercises, which will help them make more informed career choices. For you, it is then important to collect and track the results of that assessment.

Assessing geographic and practice area preferences

1. *Tools for Student Self-Assessment*

   Although a subject for another guide, it is important that we encourage students to engage in self-assessment. Knowing the type of environment in which they want to work may drive the amount of time devoted to certain sectors; knowing practice area preferences will inform not only your targets but could also affect the student's geographic preferences.

2. *Tools for Collection and Tracking*

   a. **Surveys:** You can use hard-copy surveys, online versions such as Survey Monkey (up to 10 questions free), or conduct surveys through Symplicity or other career services management systems.

   b. **Preference lists in systems such as Symplicity:** In Symplicity, students are able to make selections in their profiles. Generally you can then run reports detailing both geographic and practice area preference numbers.

   c. **Counseling notes:** Ask counselors to track areas that students are expressing interest during counseling sessions — particularly areas that are outside of your "normal" geographic or practice area preferences.

3. *Other Considerations*
    a. Surges in course enrollment for certain areas.
    b. New programs or clinics — if you have a new tax clinic, you may have an increase in students interested in tax positions.
    c. Student organization participation — is your criminal defense student organization suddenly very popular?

When to assess?

1. *Beginning of the Academic Year*: Collecting information on geographic and practice area interests at the beginning of the year can help you make final revisions to your outreach plan for the year.
    a. **1Ls:** What can you collect from the admissions office on 1Ls? The admissions office may be able to provide you with geographic information such as hometown and current addresses before students arrive at law school, and also surveys conducted on practice area interests.
    b. **2Ls/3Ls:** Do you have the opportunity to collect this information at the beginning of the year either in person or electronically? Polling them on where they plan to take the bar can be very instructive.
2. *CSO Orientation*: Assuming your office conducts an orientation for 1Ls, it's likely a good idea to add to the information you collected from admissions by polling the students directly.
3. *End of the Academic Year*: For graduating students, it is again a good idea to collect information on where they plan to take the bar, as this might affect summer outreach planning.

Using the data collected

Depending on your school and location, you will likely see concentrations in certain geographic locations. Practice area preferences may be more varied. Seeing the trends and majority preferences will help determine where to devote the majority of your outreach resources of time and money. Heavy concentrations of preferences may merit travel funding and in-person meetings. Areas or practice preferences that are less popular will likely need phone or mail outreach but may not merit travel funding. Do not forget to take advantage of your NALP connections and the opportunity to connect at the NALP Annual Education Conference or other conferences.

Remember to take advantage of the activities of other departments to support your outreach. Your admissions office may welcome your willingness to attend a graduate fair in a particular area, which may help you in sharing costs. Are your faculty speaking at a conference in a preferred city? Alumni affairs and/or development activities may be going on in areas that align with your student preferences. Your faculty, alumni, or development officers may welcome the opportunity to reach out to employers as well, particularly if there is an alumni connection. See the Secondary Engagement Opportunities section in Chapter 6 for additional ideas.

Start with Your Leads

CHAPTER

4

Identifying the Current or Past Employer Relationships to Further Develop and Strengthen

One key to identifying existing employer relationships for further development — your leads — is to consider which employers are already engaged with the law school. There are three main categories to examine:

1. **Employers who have actually hired students and recent graduates in the last two to three years.**

   Assuming that the hires worked out, you can be relatively certain that these employers are good matches for your students and have a higher likelihood of hiring future students. This list of employers will include organizations that have conducted on-campus interviews or resume collections, posted positions with your office, or offered externships.

   The employer list will also include employers who hired students and graduates directly without the assistance of the career services office. You can gather these names by analyzing your summer and graduate employment surveys, reviewing employment entries in Symplicity or another database, working with counselors and reviewing counseling notes, and talking to professors or others who are engaged with students regularly.

2. **Employers who have engaged with the law school in other ways.**

   Some examples:

   a. Those who regularly speak in classes or to student groups.

   b. Your go-to people when you have questions about hiring trends.

   c. Adjunct professors. Adjuncts can be particularly helpful because they have already shown an interest in the school by accepting a teaching position. Their firms or offices may want to explore having students work as interns, externs, law clerks, or even entry-level attorneys, especially after the adjuncts have the opportunity to see students in action in the classroom. Even adjunct professors who are not in a position to work with a student or new graduate may have excellent ideas for additional contacts that can be made by the career services office and may even be willing to make introductions to other attorneys or judges.

d. Those who conduct mock interviews or attend networking events.

e. Those who serve as mentors, either as part of a formal program or on an ad hoc basis.

3. **Attorneys who are always around the law school.**

Their higher level of engagement is a good sign that they will hire when the need arises. Maintaining these relationships is a long-term investment in future hires.

Some examples:

a. Members of a board;

b. Attorneys who work with faculty in a clinic; and

c. Moot court and other competition judges.

Finding leads is the first step. But what do you do next?

1. **Call or email these employers to set up a time to talk in person or by phone.**

Ask them for their feedback on the students or graduates they have hired or worked with or met in other capacities. Find out what they think the school's strengths and weaknesses are regarding career development and job preparedness and what they suggest your office can do to further prepare students and graduates. Find out what their hiring needs are and what they think their needs will be in the next two to three years. Most importantly, ask them how they want to engage — you might be surprised about what you haven't thought of yet.

This is also an opportunity to explain what your office and your school has to offer in regard to career development. For example, you could discuss how your office includes a wide range of employers during its on-campus interview process or how robust the legal research and writing program is, preparing students to make strong contributions to their office. You may be surprised at how much they aren't aware of and how, by educating them on what your students and graduates have to offer, you are cementing a solid relationship.

See more on maintaining employer relationships in Chapter 7.

2. **Track your leads.**

Using Symplicity, Banner, Excel, or another database, keep track of your leads and any follow-up items to come back to at a later time. It is most helpful to use a system that many career services staff can access so they will know what is going on with a particular employer when needed.

See more on tracking in Chapter 8.

3. **Follow up and keep them engaged.**

Developing relationships with employers is a long-term process. To keep employers engaged, consider the ways they can interact with students and what might be interesting for them. Anything that offers a value-add for the attorney will most likely be the most appealing. For example, if an attorney has the opportunity to network with other attorneys and law school faculty as well as students, they will see added value in their participation in that event.

Here are just a few ways the career services office can engage employers:

- Invite them to attend, host, or speak at networking events;
- Ask employers if they'd like to offer an externship;
- Ask them to conduct mock interviews;
- Invite them to serve as a mentor, either of a formal program or on an ad hoc basis;
- Invite them to speak on a panel for a class or student group; and
- Ask them to review a few resumes and cover letters to get their feedback on how your office is advising students on their application materials.

Follow-up is key here! If you end a conversation with action items, complete them and keep the employer updated. Make introductions for them (this is a value-add for them), refer clients or potential new business leads to them, or drop them a line every few months to check in on how they are doing or to follow up on your conversation. And we can't overemphasize the importance of a well-written thank you note, either by email or a handwritten card.

See more on how to engage employers in Chapter 6.

CHAPTER 5

Developing Targets

IDENTIFYING PROSPECTIVE EMPLOYERS

How do we identify prospective employers? That is, how do we find employers who, having not done so before, will hire our students for summer and permanent positions, attend and participate in programmed events, become mentors, and share their hard-earned wisdom with our students?

General Considerations

As discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, understand your school's strengths and your students' goals. This data allows you to develop a profile that you can then seek to match to employer needs. For example, if your school has a strong reputation in training litigators and many of your students want to practice business law, then part of your focus will likely be with medium to large firms serving corporate clients. If you have a group of students who want to practice family law in the local market, then you may focus part of your energy on small firms within 30 miles of your school.

Look at your current employer relationships. Once you identify who currently hires your students you can start to look for similar employers. For example, if a number of your graduates have been successful in firms serving the professional association community in Chicago, New York, and Washington, DC, then you should look for additional firms serving this large professional community. Similarly, if your students have been successful in several District Attorneys' offices near your school, you may consider developing relationships with other D.A. offices in your state.

General Research Resources

Now that you know the type of organizations you want to develop relationships with, how do you go about identifying specific employers? Once you identify a potential employer, how do you identify an "in" to help in making that initial contact? Just as we counsel our students, the answer involves research and networking. While no "list" can be all-inclusive, here are the general resources that will be beneficial for a wide range of employers:

1. American Bar Association — Sections and committees
2. Lexis Advance (Martindale Hubbell law directories) or www.martindale.com or the West Legal Directory in Westlaw Next
3. Review articles about firms/organizations in legal periodicals
4. Alumni database
5. Faculty — where did they clerk? Where did/do they practice?
6. Network at local and state bar association events, CLEs, symposia, and other substantive/practice area oriented events
7. LinkedIn

Identifying Employers and Potential Contacts by Employer Type

1. *Large law firm*
    a. NALP Directory of Legal Employers at www.nalpdirectory.com
    b. Vault/Chambers/Am Law
2. *Smaller/Medium firms*
    a. Bar directories — particularly helpful if the directory allows you to search by practice area or to search for alumni
    b. Martindale
3. *Public sector/Public service*
    a. Externship program — if your school has a robust externship program, this will be a great starting point
    b. PSJD at www.psjd.org
    c. Equal Justice Works
    d. Government Honors Handbook published by the University of Arizona
    e. Public Policy Internship Handbook — University of Arizona
    f. State government directories
4. *Judicial*
    a. OSCAR: https://oscar.uscourts.gov/index.php
    b. The Guide to State Court Judicial Clerkships published by Vermont Law School
    c. NALP guides: *Insight and Inside Information for Select State Court Clerkship, Federal ALJ Post Graduate Clerkships,* and Federal Staff Attorneys by Circuit in *Judicial Clerkships: Federal Staff Attorney Positions*
    d. Internal lists of alumni who were former clerks
    e. Faculty who formerly clerked
    f. State directories

5. *Corporate*
    a. Corporate counsel bar sections or groups (may need to have an inside contact to gain access)
    b. Fortune 500 lists
    c. Chambers of Commerce
    d. Industry newsletters/trade magazines
6. *Non-traditional*
    a. Broader university — can you meet contacts through your university's undergraduate or other graduate career offices? This may be particularly helpful if you have joint degree offerings.
    b. For corporations, you may be able to leverage your contacts in the GC's office to other parts of the company.
    c. Professional organizations — organizations like the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) can offer contacts/opportunities to network with HR professionals in the same way that NALP offers contacts with recruiting personnel. Industry specific professional organizations are also useful in networking.
    d. State bar organizations are now considering ways to help lawyers with the nebulous idea of alternative careers. See if your bar offers an opportunity to partner on such an initiative.

Timing

1. *Defined recruiting times*: For employers with fairly defined or set recruiting or application periods, you can more easily determine the best time to reach out to them.
    a. **Large firms**: Recruiting typically happens late summer/early fall. (While this may be changing, these firms will likely all stay on the same schedule, whatever that may be.) If you want to meet or talk with the firm about their program, hiring preferences, etc., the best time frames may be late fall or winter/early spring. You should avoid the summer and early fall because of summer associate programs and fall recruiting.
    b. **Government:** While many government employers hire at the same time each year, that time frame is not consistent between employers. Look at the prior year's application period to determine when may be the best approach time for that particular employer. If you can find this information, try to avoid peak times such as a heavy trial calendar or the end of a legislative session.
    c. **Judicial:** Although the timing for individual judges, both state and federal, can be all over the map, an individual judge may typically hire at roughly the same time each year. If your office has tracked or is tracking this information, you can then schedule your outreach accordingly.
2. *Undefined recruiting times*: The majority of employers are without defined or set times, so you may just weave outreach to them throughout your schedule based on student needs and timing. For example, you may focus on smaller firm outreach in early spring to inquire about summer employment opportunities for your 1L and 2L students. You may

instead plan for outreach to that same group over the summer to learn about any current permanent hiring needs for your recent graduates.

3. *Using social media and other technology*: Social media and other technologies are very useful tools in learning when changes occur with organizations or your contacts that may either require you to reach out to them or just provide a good reason to touch base.
    d. Follow employers via LinkedIn, Facebook, or Twitter.
    e. Features like the Alert Center on Westlaw Next will notify you when changes occur at certain firms or in certain industries.
    f. Google alerts will notify you when Google finds new results on topics, people, or organizations you follow.
    g. Follow blogs.

CHAPTER

6

Develop the Relationship

ENGAGING EMPLOYERS AT MULTIPLE LEVELS

Once you have identified your target employers, the next step is engaging them with you and in the life of the law school. In the beginning the employer may be hesitant to commit to a recruiting relationship or may not have an immediate need. Instead of passing them off and hoping they have a need later, you should look for other ways to engage them with your school. By doing so, you greatly enhance the likelihood that they will recruit with you when they do have an opening.

Initial Meetings

When meeting an employer representative for the first time, you need to make sure the employer knows what the "value add" is for them if they recruit or engage with your students. To help you determine how best to match the needs of the employer with the appropriate students consider asking some of the following questions:

- What practice groups are hot or cold (a) in your office? (b) in your firm? (c) in your market?
- What attributes make for a successful summer associate or first-year attorney (a) in your office? and (b) in your firm?
- If your students have worked for the employer in the past: What qualities do you look for in students from X Law School?
- If the firm has not previously recruited or hired your students: What do you think the barrier has been to recruiting at X Law School?
- What is your need for first-year attorneys vs. lateral attorneys?
- How deep in the class are you willing to look at X Law School? How does that change for students with prior work experience or technical backgrounds?
- Can you describe your diversity recruitment and retention practices?
- In a market that may value lateral attorneys more than first-year attorneys, how do you develop, promote, and retain your attorneys?

- What skills do you find lacking in first-year attorneys? Are there ways in which X Law School can provide professional development opportunities to students that would increase their chances of success?
- In what ways have you successfully engaged with other schools?
- How would you like to engage with the students at X Law School?
- Are you or any of your practice groups looking for opportunities to engage with specific student groups?
- Are you open to event/program sponsorship opportunities?
- In your summer program, are students exposed to different departments or practice groups?
- Do you have a formal mentoring program for summer interns/new hires?
- Does your office have a loan repayment assistance program (for permanent hires)?
- Beyond research projects, what kinds of hands-on experience can summer interns expect?
- If not hired by your organization, what types of work do your former interns go on to do?

Follow Up

After meeting with an employer, stay in touch and follow up, especially once the employer submits a job posting or hires a law clerk, intern, or for a permanent position. See more details on Maintaining the Relationship in Chapter 7.

Primary Engagement Opportunities

Primary employer engagement takes place through career services and academic externship programs. In addition to on-campus recruiting and posting internships, externships, clerkships, and associate positions, you can also consider any or all of the following program ideas:

1. **Career Panels:** Invite them to serve on practice area or practice setting panels administered by your office or a student group with a focus that appeals to the employer.

2. **Career Counselor for a Day:** UNC School of Law administers its Attorney-in-Residence program to give students and employers an opportunity to get to know one another. The day is centered on a noon brown-bag lunch discussion between the attorney, typically a graduate, and a group of students interested in learning more about the graduate's career path and practice area. The attorney also conducts one-on-one career counseling sessions with students either before or after the lunch program.

3. **Mock Interview Program:** Administering a mock interview program is a great way to engage local attorneys, graduates, and non-graduates alike as the interviewers.

4. **Moot Court and Mock Trial Competitions:** Employers and judges are often willing and excited to serve as judges in moot court and mock trial competitions.

5. **Informational Interviews:** Many practicing attorneys are willing to connect with students for informational interviews over lunch or coffee. These can be less formal one-on-one meetings or more organized small group meetings with students who share a common interest in a specific practice area.

6. **Networking Events:** These have many names — for example, speed networking or speed mentoring — and can be based on the locations of graduates or the locations of off-campus interview programs in which your school participates. Consider hosting alumni receptions the night before an off-campus interview program to allow students interviewing at the program to meet area alumni.

7. **Mentoring Programs:** Elon University School of Law has a Preceptor Program that pairs local practicing attorneys with every 1L. Preceptors meet with students off campus to discuss their goals and offer advice. Students shadow preceptors in their offices and in court. In addition, preceptors attend classes with students to learn more about their academic experience. Preceptors have become an integral part of the law school and ultimately assist students in their job searches and hire graduates. Alumni in particular can be engaged in the above ways and have a natural affinity for the law school.

8. **Guest Lectures:** Confer with your Associate Dean for Academic Affairs to identify classes on the schedule that may match up with an event you are planning.

9. **Clinical Program Opportunities:** Employers can serve on clinic advisory boards.

10. **Pro Bono Program Partners:** Many attorneys enjoy giving back to their communities when they have the time. Work with your school's office of public service/pro bono programs to provide opportunities for students and employers to get to know each other outside of the interview process.

11. **Develop Your Network:** Be active in your legal community. Attend the meetings of the various bar associations (local, state, and national) and become a familiar face at events hosted by the Association of Corporate Counsel.

12. **Be a Matchmaker:** Internally, introduce faculty members, deans, and administrators to attorneys in practice areas they teach or in the local community to help them build their own professional networks. Externally, employers can assist career services offices through referrals to other employers in their network. If they work for a large firm, corporation, or government agency, they may also be willing to refer you to other offices or departments within their organization that could hire students or alumni.

Secondary Engagement Opportunities

In addition to the more direct primary engagement opportunities above, there are secondary engagement opportunities.

1. **Advancement or Development Office:** A positive working relationship with your advancement or development office can be mutually beneficial as both are focused on building external relationships.
   a. These offices are in contact with the alumni on a regular basis and can provide valuable information on the hiring needs of employers.
   b. They can also be your most trusted messengers if provided with information about opportunities to interview students on campus, various off-campus interview programs in which the school participates, and opportunities to connect with students through your office — e.g., sponsoring programs or participating in panels. These opportunities increase the possibilities for engagement with the school and the students and can lead to stronger financial commitments from alumni.
   c. Advancement often plays a role in selecting law school advisory board members and they may be able to locate board spots for your employer contacts. Sitting on the board of a law school creates a presumption, or at least pressure, that your board members are willing to hire your students and graduates.
   d. In addition, some employers have philanthropic goals that can be met through a relationship with a law school.

2. **Faculty:** You should also know your faculty. Survey the faculty for practice areas of research interest, former employers, and contacts in specific locations or industries. The results can be downloaded to a spreadsheet and used in counseling students and targeting employers for relationship development.

3. **Community:** Another opportunity to connect with employers is to tie them into your community network. Attorneys are often very active in community leadership and may be actively looking to serve on economic development boards, nonprofit boards, and other community groups. By helping attorneys identify these opportunities you build goodwill with them that will often lead to more engagement with the school. In addition to your community network, you may find yourself referring employers to another school. This may seem counterintuitive, but if an employer needs to hire someone with a specialty that your school does not teach, then help them find a school that does. This way the employer recognizes that you are looking out for their best interests and will likely come back to you with future opportunities.

4. **Professional Associations:** Finally, there is an opportunity to co-publish and co-present with employers through professional associations. Attorneys and law firms are always looking to build their brand and be recognized as content area experts. Watch for opportunities to submit joint conference presentation proposals or co-author articles in professional publications. This gets both the attorney and the school in front of other professionals and helps build recognition within the legal community.

CHAPTER

7

Maintain the Relationship

Courage means to keep working a relationship, to continue seeking solutions to difficult problems, and to stay focused during stressful periods. — Denis Waitley

Once you have reached out to employers and started developing contacts, it becomes important to know how to manage and maintain those relationships. When it comes to developing long-lasting relationships, email and phone can be helpful (and in some cases the only option), but nothing substitutes for in-person meetings and regular contact.

Complete any action items
If you end a conversation with action items, complete them in a timely manner and keep the employer updated.

Maintain regular contact via phone and email
After the first in-person meeting, schedule and plan a time to make contact afterward. You can do so every few months, for example, by sending articles of interest or updating them on how a particular program or effort is going (e.g., if you spoke to them about doing on-campus interviews next year, you could update them about your current program). We recommend connecting with the employer via phone or email at least annually and in person every two to three years. Every relationship is different, however, so more frequent or less frequent contact may be appropriate. If the contact person changes at an employer's office, set up a new in-person meeting, if possible, even if you recently met with the employer. You always want your point of contact to have met you. It is much harder to say no to someone that you know!

Send congratulatory emails if the firm or an alumnus is noted in the press
Make it a point to read all of your local, state, and national legal periodicals. Over time it becomes easy to pick out the employers you work with (or want to work with) and this makes it easy to comment on these mentions in the press. It is especially important to reach out if you see that one of your alumni writes an article. It goes a long way toward a long-term relationship when you send an email simply saying, "Nice press today!" or "Great article!" or "Congratulations! Hope to speak to you soon." You will nearly always get a reply even if it is just a "thanks." They will remember you as the person at the law school who is watching out for them.

Send check-in emails when it is time for a firm to list opportunities
When an employer regularly lists a position (e.g., a summer associate position) with your law school, you should send them a check-in email reminding them about it. It lets them know you are interested in working with them and it helps them remember the appropriate time to list their opportunities. Plus, it could be perceived as a service that you render to the employer. These can be form emails blind copied to many employers just as long as it is personally from you and the responses go to your personal email.

Keep them engaged
There are many ways to engage employers. As stated in a previous chapter, consider the ways they can interact with students and what might be interesting for them. Any option that offers a value-add for the attorney will most likely be the most appealing. For example, if attorneys have the opportunity to network with other attorneys and law school faculty as well as students, they will see added value in their participation in that event. Below are some other ideas.

- Invite them to attend, host, or speak at networking events — even if virtual;
- Invite them to events that might be of interest to them that are being held at the law school (look through your law school events monthly and invite the appropriate people to attend the right events.);
- Send news articles and other items that pertain to their field of practice;
- Ask employers if they'd like to offer an externship;
- Ask them to conduct mock interviews;
- Invite them to serve as a mentor, either of a formal program or on an ad hoc basis;
- Invite them to speak on a panel for a class or student group; and
- Ask them to review a few resumes and cover letters to get their feedback on how your office is advising students on their application materials.

Use social media in your communication plan
Consider how social media can support your plan to stay in touch with employers. Some ideas include inviting them to join a LinkedIn group (e.g., an alumni group if the employer is an alum, or a location-specific group if they are located in that particular place) and showcasing your office's support of the employer's achievements by posting about them on Facebook, Twitter, or LinkedIn (e.g., they won award for being the most diverse office in the area). You could also use social media as a way to remind them about upcoming events or programs that might interest them and to highlight opportunities to work with them, scholarships they offer, or other items of note. Using social media as a two-way street — the chance for the CSO to gain something, like a job posting, and the chance for the employer to gain something, like publicity — can firmly cement a relationship.

Use technology to assist in your follow-up
In Chapter 8 on Recordkeeping, there are many ideas about how to track and record your employer contact and follow up options. A few places to start, however, could be something as simple as working with the technology you already have and are comfortable working with. If you

use Google or Outlook, you can set yourself reminders and alerts. If you use Symplicity, you can enter notes and check them regularly to see which employers are due for follow-up each day. If you like spreadsheets, you can maintain an Excel spreadsheet with dates for follow-up noted.

Tailor your relationships based on the type of employer

All of this needs to be the right activity for the right employer. If, at your in-person meeting, the employer tells you that they only hire attorneys with more than five years of experience, don't ask them each semester if they want student interns. The employer may think you have not listened to them. Other employers will want to hear from you each semester (fall, spring, and summer), and some would prefer to hear from you every few years. It is up to you to craft the relationship that makes sense for you and the employer, and this may take trial and error. However, you may find that simply asking the employer "When should I contact you?" works!

Recordkeeping

CHAPTER

8

Do not judge each day by the harvest you reap but by the seeds that you plant.
— Robert Louis Stevenson

While many law school career offices conduct outreach, tracking and recordkeeping are often the last things to get done because they do not seem urgent compared to all of the other competing responsibilities at the office. If you are a new counselor hired specifically for employer outreach or you are in an existing office and are looking to revamp your employer outreach initiatives, below are key tips from counselors experienced in employer outreach to help you get a handle on tracking and recordkeeping.

Create a comprehensive outreach plan
To help counselors stay invested in outreach (especially because this is usually the first part of the job that counselors put off given the other urgent demands of the job), have a meeting to discuss the importance of outreach to the office, to the students, and to the larger institution.

Define targets
Discover the interests of current students and recent graduates, and create a targeted list of employers based on those interests. At a minimum, these interests should include geographic locations, practice areas, type of employer, and size of employer (e.g., Silicon Valley, technology transactions, boutique firm, 10-25 employees). Absent a targeted list, the outreach can be very overwhelming, haphazard, and ineffective. Deciding on a targeted list of employers at the start of every academic year will allow for a more focused and productive outreach season.

Decide on the number of contacts that is reasonable and achievable. Contact may include sending a "congrats" email about winning an award, attending a networking reception, or talking via phone or in person. Assess how much time you are designating to conduct outreach and decide what is a reasonable and achievable number. For example, a counselor who is doing outreach more than 75% of the time might be aiming to meet with 25-30 employers a month, whereas a counselor who is spending only 25% of the time doing outreach might aim to meet with two to five employers a month. Remember that the time spent on outreach is not limited to the time spent on meeting or talking to employers but will also include time spent researching the various organizations, sending inquiry emails, and doing follow-up.

Tracking Contacts and Reporting

Checklist: Make a checklist of all the vital information you want tracked on your database. Typical information to track includes:

- name of the organization,
- contact information,
- geographic location,
- practice area,
- context of the relationship: Is this person an alumnus? A referral?
- whether this contact is new or an employer you are trying to reengage,
- date and form of contact (e.g., email, phone call, in-person, lunch talk, networking event, etc.),
- summary of information discussed (e.g., spoke at lunch talk, sent congrats on winning award email, qualities looking for in students or recent graduates, salary range),
- next steps (e.g., when to follow up, whether the employer is interested in serving on a panel or other engagement opportunities mentioned in Chapter 6), and
- primary liaison within the career services office.

Database: Pick a database to store information gathered. The most common system that counselors interviewed work with is Symplicity with Excel. Other counselors have also used Excel, ACT, or Google Docs. Whatever database you decide to use, make sure that every counselor has access to the system, is aware of how to use the system, and is aware of the vital information tracked.

Reports: The information included should be something that any counselor, even those who do not conduct outreach, will find useful in counseling students.

Evaluation: Assess and reassess your system so that you can adapt it to your growing and changing needs. Once you create a system, make sure that everyone in your office sticks to it for a specific period of time (e.g., six months, a year). When you are creating a new system, there are likely kinks that will need to be worked out, so set a date to reassess your needs and adapt your database accordingly.

Define and educate others on what successful outreach means. Remember that conducting outreach is about building relationships, so success is not only defined by getting a job posting. Rather, success happens when you initiate contact, which may include your first email or phone call to set up a meeting, or your first email or letter to send a congratulations note on being mentioned in an alumni magazine. To keep everyone informed, including administrators from other departments, create a report on the results you have achieved under your definition of success.

Virtual Outreach

CHAPTER

9

During the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020-21, law schools have had to sharpen their skills and work remotely, without the usual face to face interaction between students and employers. This will serve as a benefit and advantage to law schools' employer outreach work post-pandemic and in the future. Many law schools work with employers that are geographically far flung from the physical law school campus. In-person visits for OCI and employer outreach visits have not been easy and have sometimes been expensive for both entities. During the pandemic, using a virtual meeting platform, such as Zoom, has become normative. These virtual face-to-face meetings with employers are extremely useful and should be used by employers to interview students as a matter of course. As a result of the pandemic, there are remote/virtual jobs now available and certainly more will be available in the future.

However, there are some things to keep in mind when requesting a virtual meeting with an employer, or scheduling an interview for remote positions. Employers' firm cultures and practices need to be taken into account. For example, asking a personal injury firm to offer remote jobs may not be wise as this area of practice usually requires in-person court appearances. Further, being mindful and empathetic to all personal situations when requesting a virtual meeting is vital — especially when dealing with the elongated pandemic.

The process of targeting an employer in a virtual world is indeed the same as in person, but the virtual outreach process requires much more thought and consideration about the firms' practice and a person's individual situation.

Appendix

See the following pages for sample recordkeeping ideas.

SAMPLE TARGET LIST

(SIMPLE LIST USING EXCEL)

Employer	Type of Employer	Practice Area	Referred By	Type of Outreach Planned	Contact	Email	Phone	Street Address	City, State, Zip

With Excel, you can tab different sheets to create separate target lists by sector, by month, or by any other subcategory you find helpful to plan your outreach.

Sample Tracking Log Using Excel

Employer	Type of Employer	Practice Area	Referred By	Contact	Email	Phone	Address	Contact Date	Type of Contact	Purpose	Result	Follow-up Action Item

You will likely want to pair this tracking log with lengthier reports. See examples in the next few pages.

SAMPLE EMPLOYER OUTREACH REPORT (PRIVATE)

School Logo/Name **Employer Outreach Notes**

DATE:		**OFFICE ADDRESS/ OFFICE SIZE:**	
EMPLOYER:		**CONTACT:**	
CSO MEMBER:			

Personal Notes on Contact:

About the Firm/Office (Includes relevant practices, other offices**):**

Hiring Needs:

Application Process:

Preferred Candidate Qualifications:

Tips on Application or Interviewing:

Follow-up Considerations:

SCHOOL NAME/LOGO

Government, Agency, or Organization Outreach Guide

<table>
<tr><td>Employer</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Contact Name</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Phone</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Email</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">About the Employer:</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2"></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">List Alums Currently or Formerly Employed:</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2"></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Number of Interns by Semester/Minimum Hours Required:</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2"></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Qualifications Required/Preferred:</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2"></td></tr>
<tr><td>Intern Hiring Process
(include deadlines/materials):</td><td>Examples of Typical Interview Questions:</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Day-to-Day Experience for Intern
(including types of assignments, feedback methods, evaluation process):</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2"></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Permanent Hiring Needs:</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2"></td></tr>
</table>

Qualifications Required/Preferred:	
Permanent Hiring Process (include deadlines/materials):	**Examples of Typical Interview Questions:**
Day-to-Day Experience for Employee (including types of assignments, feedback methods, evaluation process):	
Fellowships	
Type(s) typically sponsored:	
Preferred Topics:	
Timeline/Deadlines:	

Other:
Follow-up:

Special thanks to the team of Patricia Hodny, Leeor Neta, and Danielle Sorken for inspiring this form in their presentation and handouts entitled "Not All Employer Outreach Is Equal: Navigating Public Service Employer Outreach" at the 2012 NALP Annual Education Conference.

JUDICIAL CLERKSHIP OUTREACH NOTES

Judge:	
Federal/State:	
Court:	
Circuit:	
Brief bio:	
Former alumni or faculty clerks:	
Contact for chambers:	

CLERKSHIP OPPORTUNITIES:

Number of clerkships available for this judge: __________

Anticipated start date of next available opening: ________________________________

Appointments are for: __________ One Year __________ Two Years __________ List Other

How should students apply? __________ OSCAR __________ Paper __________ Email

Prefers:
________ Individual application materials
________ Application material packets from law schools

When should students submit clerkship applications? ________________________ (date)

Required application materials:

Cover letter ☐ Yes ☐ No
Resume ☐ Yes ☐ No
Law school transcript ☐ Yes ☐ No
Writing sample ☐ Yes ☐ No If yes, specified length? ____________
Letters of recommendation ☐ Yes ☐ No Number required? ________________
Other ____

Required/preferred qualifications:

Interview timing/process:

INTERNSHIP OPPORTUNITIES:

Offer any paid internships? □ Yes □ No

Willing to allow a student to intern for class credit? □ Yes □ No

If yes, prefer: □ First Year □ Second Year □ No preference

Best Time to Apply ________________________________

Required Application Materials:

Cover letter	□ Yes	□ No	
Resume	□ Yes	□ No	
Law school transcript	□ Yes	□ No	
Writing sample	□ Yes	□ No	If yes, specified length? ___________
Letters of recommendation	□ Yes	□ No	Number required? ______________

Other ____

Required/preferred qualifications:

Interview timing/process: