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Top 5 Summer Tips: First Week and Last Week

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This practice note outlines five practical tips you can use as a summer associate to help you through the first week and last week of your program. Unlike other short-term jobs you may have had while you were in school, the goal of this summer is not just to make money or give you a break from taxing academic endeavors. This job will be an important step toward your future career as a lawyer. The following tips will help you navigate your first and last points of contact during the summer to make the most of the experience.

Your First Week

1. Introduce yourself to as many people as possible.

This includes the attorneys and staff sitting near you and the attorneys in the practice groups that interest you. While it may feel a bit awkward to approach them in the beginning, be assured that they want to meet you—summer associates are a breath of fresh air in the firm, and the attorneys are looking forward to your arrival. By

introducing yourself, you'll surely make a good impression, and the attorneys will think of you for work assignments as the summer progresses.

2. Be ready, be present, and be proactive.

This is your summer, and you should do everything you can to make the most of it and to put yourself in a position to excel. Do your best to tune out non-work-related issues and events in your life. Stay focused on the firm and your assignments during working hours. If you see others at



their desks with headphones in, don't follow suit, even if they tell you that this is how they work (or even if they say this is how everyone works). You want to convey to the firm that you are ready and willing to work, and you won't be seen as approachable if you are seemingly in your own world.

3. Be open to everything.

Even if a particular assignment is not strictly in the practice area that interests you, approach it with an open mind. You never know what work, or group of attorneys, will strike a chord with you, since you haven't yet had direct experience working as a lawyer. The summer is a two-way street, and while the attorneys are evaluating you, you are also evaluating the attorneys and the practice groups at the firm. There are many examples of summer associates who start out their summers thinking that they are destined to be litigators, only to find out that transactional work is what really piques their interest (the inverse is also true).

4. Take advantage of the firm's resources.

Put your all into the training that the firm offers and pay close attention to the tips and advice that you are given. The firm invests a great deal of time and money into providing you with these resources, and they're all there for your benefit. You will likely also learn about what skills the firm values. For example, if they spend a lot of time training you on legal writing, you can be sure that you will be evaluated based on the standards conveyed in that training.

5. Show up early.

This goes for the rest of the summer too. If the official start time is 9:30, arrive at 9 or earlier. You'll benefit by being seen as a go-getter, and it will give you time to get yourself organized, settled, and relaxed before diving into your work for the day. This will also give you an opportunity to chat with attorneys you want to get to know better, before the pace of their day makes it more difficult to do so.



Your Last Week

1. Don't be shy about what you like.

Be sure that the attorneys in the practice group that interests you are well aware of your interest. This should really start in the few weeks leading up to the end of the summer. It is critical that you make your preference known. Don't assume that the practice group leaders will figure it out as a result of your hard work alone. You should also not assume that you'll have time after the conclusion of the summer to convey your wishes, as hiring decisions are informally made throughout the summer.

2. Complete final tasks.

Finish your assignments early enough in the week to allow time for the assigning attorneys to follow up with any additional questions/work that may flow from the original assignment. You won't make a good impression if you drop something on an attorney's desk as you have one foot out the door.

3. Follow up.

Contact attorneys who assigned work to you previously during the summer to see what happened with your assignments. Inquire about the ultimate outcome of that deal/case and ask whether there may be any new work stemming from a prior engagement. You will impress the attorneys with your interest, and you will show that you want to be a contributing member of the team and view your role as more long-lasting than a one-time assignment.

4. Get advice.

Ask your preferred practice group about classes/clinics in which you should enroll during your 3L year to give you as much of an edge as possible before starting full time. The attorneys may have specific suggestions based on their current workload or on directions in which they see the group heading.

5. Thank the recruiting team members.

They work very hard to make your summer a success and will appreciate your recognition. They will also be a good resource for you as your 3L year progresses and you prepare to return to the firm.



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