Researching Potential Employers:

A Strategy Guide for Finding Attorneys that Do the Work You’d Like to do and with Whom You may Already Share a Network

Think of networking as merely contacting people with whom you share something in common so you can talk about what you share in common. You’re already in a network with people who can help connect you with opportunities whether you know it or not—this handout is designed to help you identify those people.

There are a variety of online resources that can help you discover people in your network. The information below is designed to provide a step-by-step strategy for comprehensive network development.

(1) Start with reviewing these three instructional websites that can help you develop a process and approach for finding people to contact:
      i. This guide identifies a number of books and webpages to tackle the hunt for potential employers from a big-picture approach.
   b. Moritz Law Career Services’ Researching Potential Employers: https://moritzlaw.osu.edu/careers/students/start-your-job-search/researching-potential-employers/
      i. This webpage provides specific websites and some tips for researching a variety of legal employers
      i. This guide provides comprehensive, detailed instructions for searching for people online. The instructions include sample searches you might try as well as almost every website that could prove helpful in your search.

(2) Don’t get frustrated that the resources we’re listing don’t give you a magic bullet list of potential employers. This is a discovery process and a long game. The people you meet and connect with now might help you land a great job or a client or other valuable opportunity far into the future.

(3) Think very broadly about all the ways you might be networked with people
   a. Lawyers who went to your undergraduate institution
   b. Lawyers who went to your law school
   c. Lawyers who were on the same journal as you or were in the same student organizations (including in undergrad)
   d. Lawyers who participated in the same sports as you or were in your sorority or fraternity
   e. Lawyers who work in the areas you’d like to work (or companies where you’d like to work or in a firm size you’d be interested in working in)
Most of the websites listed in this handout are legal directories (i.e., lists of people and law firms). It’s worth searching them in a group because the content in them varies in scope and accuracy, and it’s best to have as much accurate info as possible when reaching out to someone in your network. Open a webpage and have multiple tabs open to cross reference the people and law firms you find.

a. Lexis owns Martindale.com; Westlaw owns Findlaw. Theoretically, this means the content on the sister sites is duplicative, but that’s not always the case.

Some of the content in these directories is machine-generated (e.g., Findlaw Legal Directory) and some is user-generated (e.g., Martindale.com (fee-based) and LinkedIn (free)).

a. For websites where users create their own directory listing (e.g., LinkedIn), it can pay off to search (1) by groups people may have joined (e.g., Moritz alumni), (2) by keyword in case they haven’t officially joined a group on the website (e.g., Moritz law), and (3) using misspellings (e.g., Mortz) because, well, humans make mistakes.

b. For websites where users create their own directory listing (e.g., LinkedIn), search by acronyms (e.g., PBRG, PILF) and separately by the full name the acronym represents (e.g., Pro Bono Research Group, Public Interest Law Foundation)

c. For websites like LinkedIn that have premium services or various user privacy settings, if you find an anonymous person in your search (e.g., “RA at Mortz College of Law”), try opening a separate tab and running a search in Google for that specific phrase: “RA at Mortz College of Law” to see if the user’s complete profile will appear.

The directories have different degrees of search functionality.

a. Some really only give you ways to run keyword searches; some give you categories (i.e., search facets) that you can search within as an initial matter; and some force you to run a broad search first and then limit your results using categories. Consult this guide for examples: https://guides.lib.uw.edu/law/researchinglawyers