

November 6, 2019

The first 100 days at a new job – interview with career coach and bestselling author Carmen Schön

In connection to our recruiting event “Boost your career – with Goodwin” on November 6, 2019 Carmen Schön, management consultant, lawyer coach and bestselling author was interviewed by Frankfurt’s Office Administration Specialist Pia Weber, on how to kick-off your career as a trainee or lawyer in a big law firm.

1. HOW TO BEST MASTER THE FIRST 100 DAYS ON A NEW JOB?

Take some time to gain comfort in your new position.

Understand the processes and ways of how people work and interact. Every law firm has its culture. Thus, do not conclude from previous experiences and expect everything to be the same in a new firm.

It is important to learn how to best communicate with partners in a law firm. Partners do not have the time to train and brief new joiners in detail. It is in your best interest to make sure to obtain all relevant information to be able to properly complete a task. If a partner is busy, reach out to senior associates or your mentor. Be open and display willingness to take over new tasks. Introduce yourself to colleagues from your team or department and interact with them.

2. WHAT IS MOST IMPORTANT TO EMPLOYERS IN THE RECRUITING PROCESS?

Recruiting processes differ from one law firm to another. Some firms have standardised procedures, others focus on getting to know candidates during multiple interviews with different members of a team.

Eventually, partners focus on whether the candidate will fit into the envisaged position. In this regard, professional experience becomes more and more relevant with increasing seniority level of a candidate. For candidates with exposure to clients, a high level of professionalism is expected.

Working hours are an important subject. Starting off in a new position often means that the candidate needs to prove himself/herself. Therefore, it is not recommended i.e. to ask for a sabbatical in the first interview.

3. DOS AND DON'TS AS A NEW JOINER IN A TEAM

First, get to know and understand the team structure and dynamics. Reflect on how the people interact and communicate.

Integration into a pre-existing solid team structure is a process that takes time and requires prudence, tact and sensitivity. Be mindful to not take sides or to be intrigued to adopt an opinion on the team members.

As the newest member of a team, be respectful towards more senior colleagues. Note that there are certain unwritten rules that have been established over time on how to interact with each other, especially amongst associates.

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