**Crafting Your Writing Sample:**

As a lawyer, your writing skills present your greatest tool of the trade. If your writing skills are not up to par when you graduate, do everything you can to hone them—take a professional writing class or a CLE seminar focused on legal writing, for example.

Many employers request a writing sample among your supporting materials for a job application. The following are some tips for drafting and crafting your writing sample:

1. Consult the potential employer for any preferences on what type of document should be submitted—some employers, for example, will request a specific document such as a trial memorandum. If nothing is specified, aim for a professional (legal) writing sample which showcases your research, writing, and analytical skills. Some examples include an interoffice memorandum you drafted for a writing class, or the argument section of an appellate brief.
2. Be mindful of tone and content. Don’t use colloquialisms, slang, off-color humor, or informal language.
3. If you are using a writing sample you wrote for a former or current employer, be sure you redact all client and confidential information. In addition, be sure you have permission by the firm to use the sample.
4. Proofread and revise your writing sample as necessary before you send it out; also, consider asking a trusted source to proofread your sample for you.

**Providing Professional References:**

Many employers will request a number of professional references who will vouch for you as a potential employee. The following are some tips:

1. Secure references before you begin your job search. Choose professional, not personal references, and aim for people who are familiar with your work ethic and your work product.
2. This goes without saying: be honest in disclosing your professional relationship to each reference and the length of time you have known the reference.
3. Provide a list of references on a separate sheet of paper, using the same letterhead and paper you used for your resume and cover letter.
4. Take your list of references with you to all interviews, even if the employer has not asked for it specifically.
5. Send a follow-up to your references, thanking them for agreeing to serve as your references.

In some cases, an employer may request letters of recommendation from your professional references. A solid letter of recommendation should, at minimum, include the following:

* The letter writer’s professional relationship to you and the capacity in which the letter writer knows you;
* The length of time for which the letter writer has known you;
* The letter writer’s impressions of your skill set and your greatest strengths;
* The letter writer’s prediction as to whether you are a good fit for the particular position for which you are applying;
* The letter writer’s recommendation as to whether you should be hired for the position.

**Sample Listing of Professional References:**

1. Full Name of Reference

Title of Reference

Firm/Company of Reference

Business Address of Reference

Business Phone of Reference

Business Email Address of Reference

Professional Relationship of Reference to Applicant (e.g. Former Supervisor)

Length of Time Applicant Has Known Reference

1. Full Name of Reference

Title of Reference

Firm/Company of Reference

Business Address of Reference

Business Phone of Reference

Business Email Address of Reference

Professional Relationship of Reference to Applicant (e.g. Former Supervisor)

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