

Is Your OCI And Callback Interview Process As Strategic As It Can Be?

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Legal recruiters at law firms nation-wide are feeling the pressure to hire the best talent while getting the most out of their budgets and resources. With the recruiting season almost upon us, consider the costs of interviewing and how your Firm can be more strategic and efficient in hiring top legal talent.

Before diving into OCI and callbacks, you may want to read through NALP's "[Perspectives on Fall 2011 Law Student Recruiting](#)," and see how you measure up in your specific market. For example, last year in the New York City legal market, only 48.9% of callback interviews resulted in offers. How did your Firm compare? If you stop and think about how expensive it is to bring candidates back for callback interviews, what would you target as your callback offer rate? It is fair to say that by adhering to best practices a reasonable goal would be to have 65% of callbacks result in offers. Rates approaching 50% sound more like a flip of a coin than a strategic approach to finding talent.

What IS the cost of interviewing?

Using fairly conservative estimates for billable hours at New York City firms, interviewing one 2L candidate can cost between \$1,900 and \$2,800.

Each candidate meets with:	Duration of Interview:	Billable Rate	Cost of Billable Time
1 mid level attorney, on-campus screening	20 minutes	\$500 hourly	\$167
1 junior attorney	40 minutes	\$300 hourly	\$200
1 senior attorney	40 minutes	\$600 hourly	\$400
2 partners	40 minutes (x 2)	\$850 hourly	\$1,133
Cost of billable time per candidate			\$1,900

Additional Candidate Expenses		Cost of Additional Expenses
Lunch	3 people @ \$50/person	\$150
Travel	Transportation, hotel, meals	\$750
Cost of additional expenses per candidate		\$900

These estimates only include billable hour costs and do not factor in the substantial administrative expenses involved in recruitment.

The average NYC law firm invites 139 candidates for callback interviews and extends offers to 49% of those candidates. Firms are currently investing between \$264,100 and \$389,200 on callback interviews. These firms are rejecting 70 candidates at a minimum cost of \$1,900 per student; this amounts to \$133,000 in billable time alone! In addition, you have 70 law students walking around campuses at your target schools who have been rejected. When a Firm extends offers to 49% of interviewed candidates, they unnecessarily pollute their Firm brand and reputation. Do you still remember the Firms that rejected you after bringing you back for interviews? I know I do!

How can firms be more strategic?

There are three ways to improve your recruitment statistics and get the right talent for your Firm. The places to focus strategically include:

- ✓ Increasing your callback acceptance rate
- ✓ Increasing your offer rate
- ✓ Increasing your acceptance rate

To implement an effective interview strategy that results in hiring top talent most efficiently, we suggest:

- ✓ Benchmarking your Firm's interview statistics against the industry averages
- ✓ Identifying areas that could be improved
- ✓ Initiating tactics including training your lawyers to interview more effectively

This will enable you to reduce costs, maximize resources, and prevent damage to your Firm's reputation.



The model below outlines the current averages for the New York market and what we believe are the ideal numbers to target. There are three areas for impact that can be affected through more rigorous and strategic interviewing methods. To truly impact your firm's bottom line and recruit top talent, you will want to affect both the number of callback invitations and the number of offers you extend. If your goal is a 15-person Summer Associate class and you successfully improve these three rates, you will be able to invite fewer students for callback interviews, resulting in additional cost savings. Our recommendation is that you reduce the number of students invited for callbacks from 139 to 100. This immediately saves your lawyers' time and an average of \$91,650, while still yielding 15 Summer Associates.

	Current NYC Averages*	Ideal Model	
Summer Class Size	15	15	<div style="border: 1px solid black; background-color: #FFD700; padding: 5px; text-align: center;">Strategic Areas of Impact:</div> <p>Increase your offer acceptance rate with more effective follow-up</p>
Offer Acceptance Rate	29%	33%	
Offers Extended	45	45	
Callbacks Resulting in Offers	49%	65%	<p>Increase your offer rate through more rigorous, in-depth interviewing</p>
Callback Interviews Conducted	95	70	<p>Increase your callback acceptance rate with better marketing and on-campus impressions</p>
Callback Invitations Accepted	68%	70%	
Callback Invitations Extended	139	100	
Cost of Interviewing Range**	\$264,100 to \$389,200	\$190,000 to \$280,000	<div style="border: 1px solid black; background-color: #FFD700; padding: 5px; text-align: center;">Average Expected Savings: \$91,650</div>
Mean Cost of Interviewing	\$326,650	\$235,000	

*Based on NALP's Perspectives on Fall 2011 Law Student Recruiting

**Based on per candidate interview cost of \$1,900-\$2,800

The question to ask is how to get the best return on your interviewing investment. How can your Firm recruit the best new talent while most effectively using its resources? Remember the same top students are getting offers from your competitors. How can you help your Firm improve your interview process and yield the right talent?

There are many ways to immediately impact your hiring statistics, such as indentifying your best OCI recruiters from past successes, having your Summer Associates and newest attorneys market to target students from their schools, and leveraging law school relationships to ensure that those advising students know your Firm's career advantages. In addition, you may also want to train your lawyers to employ more rigorous on-campus interviewing methods, follow up with candidates more effectively, or help students to better distinguish your Firm's benefits from their competing offers. A more efficient interview process saves time, reduces costs of billable hours and firm resources, and preserves the Firm's reputation. Where is there opportunity for you to strategically improve your process? If you want to improve your lawyers' interviewing techniques, contact Wisnik Career Enterprises to learn about customized interviewer training workshops, designed to help you to hire the right talent, communicate a clear Firm-selling message to target candidates, and reduce costs associated with the interview process. When lawyers are trained and highly skilled at identifying, assessing, and marketing to top talent, the best hiring decisions will be made, resulting in a higher return on investment from your recruiting process.

