



Sidley Austin

This document is designed to guide you through an assessment centre at Sidley Austin.

Using your preparation time

Around 15 minutes before your interview, you will be given a short article. Here is how we recommend you structure this time.

- First time reading should take you around 7-8 minutes and we recommend that you highlight key themes/issues, with an eye to the underlying argument in the article.
 - o What is the article about? Who are the main stakeholders?
- On a second reading, home in on the most important parts of the article and make some more detailed notes using your extra-research prior to the assessment centre.
 - o After identifying the stakeholders think about each individually. What is each stakeholder interested in? What issues could each of them run into and most importantly, how can these be solved?
- On a third reading, skim the article with your focus being on establishing an introduction, main body, and concluding thoughts on the article.

The interview

After establishing your thoughts on the article in your preparation time, the interview may commence either with the article itself or some more general interview questions.

General questions

Though the case study is a big part of the interview, the general questions are equally important.

There are some key areas that the questions will focus on:

- Motivation
 - o Be genuine and persuasive in your answer drawing on your past experiences to demonstrate that not only are you interested in commercial law/Sidley, but also that you would succeed in such a demanding field/firm.
- Key competences such as teamwork, leadership, and analytical skills.
 - o Consistently use the STAR (Situation, Task, Action, Result) method to demonstrate your competences. The most important parts are the last two. Go into detail about how you tackled the challenge at hand and show off the results of your hard work.
- Your academic results and work experience
 - o This may be the opportunity for you to explain any poor results in the past, or even show off some of your achievements.
- Your extra-curricular interests
 - o Sidley Austin prioritise finding candidates that have hobbies outside of work and will be keen to hear about your passions. Your hobbies can indirectly demonstrate some key skills, so be sure to incorporate a STAR answer (where applicable) to show off.

The article/case study

Most interviewers will ask you to summarise the article. This is where your preparation time is key. Follow your plan and give a concise and powerful summary of the key issues in the article.

The subject matter of articles varies greatly so it is important to work on your skills rather than parroting out an analysis of an M&A case study (for example).

Here are some essential pointers:

- **Attention to detail**
 - Despite having had weeks of keeping up to date with commercial stories to build your commercial awareness, the biggest source of information is the article itself. Pay attention to the tone of the article, and understand the argument being made by the author. This shows that you are engaging with the particular issues being raised (rather than some generic ones).
- **Be specific**
 - Don't be generic in your insights – tailor them to the article, looking at the:
 - Industry
 - Political and Social background
 - Technological background
 - Environmental background
 - Legal background
- **ALWAYS suggest an answer**
 - These interviews are designed to push you to the limits of your understanding so you WILL be asked a question to which you don't know the answer. Be calm and use whatever information you have to suggest an answer or ask a question.