CDO: Law Firm Trait Assessments

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We wanted to make you aware that this year, a few EIW employers, notably O'Melveny and Latham, are asking applicants to complete a 20-30 minute online assessment before (or immediately after) their callback interviews. This is a new development in the legal industry, although psychometric assessments have been widely used for some time in other industries.

O'Melveny, which employed Pymetrics to help them develop a game-based tool, prepared a one page briefing for students, which is attached here. Latham, on a trial basis, is using a test developed by Koru7. Both firms tell us that the results may be used in making their summer employment offer decisions (alongside resume, grades, and interviewer feedback). They will NOT be used in deciding who receives callback interview invitations. And, of course, none of this has any bearing on whether you receive an initial OCI screening interview since that is controlled entirely by our lottery process.

Firms using these tools are generally unspecific about what they are testing, except to state that they are aimed at identifying a candidate's potential for “success” at their firms. There are no “right” or “wrong” answers, so there is no real way to “study” or “prepare” for them. But we wanted to let you know in advance that you might be asked to take such tests.

We applaud efforts on the part of employers to reduce bias and to go beyond students' transcripts. In concept, these assessments have that potential, but we are reserving judgment until we see how this all plays out in practice.

In the meantime, our advice is to not complete these assessments until AFTER you have been offered a callback with a firm that uses them. And if you have one or more disabilities that may implicate your ability to take these kinds of assessments, we would be happy to act as a go-between with employers to obtain accommodations/exemptions. On this subject, O'Melveny has told us that “Pymetrics currently offers accommodations for color-blindness, dyslexia, and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). Candidates who are blind or have . . . disabilities that impact hand coordination should request an accommodation to skip this portion of the application process.” For both firms, we encourage students with disabilities (including disabilities not mentioned in O'Melveny's statement) to seriously consider seeking accommodations/exemptions, and we would be glad to talk through this with you.

On the issue of privacy, O'Melveny has provided a link to Pymetrics privacy policy.

We will be seeking your feedback about these assessments via survey at the end of the recruiting season. In the meantime, we would welcome hearing about your experiences with them informally, via email, at any point in the process.
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Attachments: Pymetrics_One-Pager_(2).pdf