



# Interviewing Across Difference:

## A Practical Program for Legal Interviewers

A law firm's most valuable asset is its people, making hiring one of the most important processes it undertakes. Student recruitment is a major investment, requiring substantial non-billable hours, firm-wide coordination, and professional judgment. Today's students bring a range of identities, communication styles, and expectations to the process.

Candidates pay close attention to how firms conduct interviews, and the quality of that experience shapes both their decisions and a firm's reputation within the student community. Strong interviewing practices also help firms avoid unnecessary attrition down the road.

Despite its importance, hiring is a complex skill for which most lawyers never receive formal training. Many would benefit from guidance on how to communicate across difference or ground hiring decisions in the skills, behaviours, and attributes that matter for success – rather than general impressions, untested instincts, or perceived “fit.”

## Program at a Glance

- **Format:** Virtual session
- **Length:** Two hours
- **Facilitators:** Nikki Gersh bain & Maya Kotob
- **Pricing:** Available upon request
- **Availability:** July 6-August 7; September 8-October 30; January 11-February 12

**Accredited for 2 EDI Professionalism hours by the Law Society of Ontario, with applications for accreditation in other provinces underway. For more, email [hello@ideaconsultinggroup.ca](mailto:hello@ideaconsultinggroup.ca).**

# What Sets This Program Apart

To help interview teams engage with a range of candidates, many firms turn to unconscious bias training. While these programs are important, they often remain rooted in theory and research, offering limited guidance on interviewing techniques or the kinds of complex cross-cultural dynamics.

By contrast, Interviewing Across Difference is extremely practical. The program equips interviewers with the tools needed to assess candidates objectively, ask targeted follow-up questions, distinguish substance from style, and base decisions on clear evidence of capability.

Drawing on nuanced, real-world, and often challenging recruitment scenarios, Interviewing Across Difference equips interviewers with a structured evaluation method and interview strategies that reduce reliance on subjective impressions. It also helps lawyers engage with cultural fluency, exercise discretion objectively, and create a recruitment experience that is fair, inclusive, and professional.

## Pause – Pinpoint – Probe™: A Structured Evaluation Framework

Central to Interviewing Across Difference is a framework we call Pause – Pinpoint – Probe™, which reminds interviewers to slow their thinking, stay grounded in the competencies they are assessing, and test their impressions before reaching a conclusion.

- **Pause:** Notice your reaction
- **Pinpoint:** Identify the competency
- **Probe:** Test your judgment

## Participants Will Learn To:

- Interrupt their assumptions
- Distinguish style from competence
- Navigate identity-related dynamics
- Test relevant competencies
- Translate impressions objectively
- Evaluate candidates consistently

Interviewing Across Difference approaches hiring in a practical and non-judgmental way, equipping lawyers with clear frameworks and up-to-date language – not scripts or rigid rules.

# Interviewing Across Difference: Optional Companion Guide

Firms may purchase a companion recruitment guide that contains practical tools to support a structured and consistent process. It includes:

- A law student competency framework
- Sample skills-based interview questions
- An evidence-based scoring rubric
- Clear evaluation and calibration guidance

## Who We Work With

IDEA Consulting Group advises organizations across Canada on equitable workplace practices, and delivers education tailored to the legal sector.

### Select clients include

- City of Mississauga
- Fogler Rubinoff
- Law Society of Saskatchewan
- Lenczner Slaght
- Lerner's
- Maple Leaf Sports and Entertainment
- Siskinds
- Subaru Canada
- Wildeboer Dellelce

### Select educational engagements of both facilitators

- Adair Goldblatt
- McCarthy Tétrault
- Torkin Manes
- Ontario Court of Appeal
- Law Society of Ontario
- The Advocates Society
- Ontario Trial Lawyers Association
- Osgoode Professional Development
- Criminal Lawyers Association



*IDEA Consulting Group helped our firm develop our strategy, and we later invited Nikki back to deliver firm-wide education. Her training exceeded even our high expectations, and was among the most engaging sessions we've hosted. Nikki brings deep expertise, clarity, and humour to complex and sometimes uncomfortable issues, addressing them in a thoughtful and non-judgmental way that resonates with lawyers – and holds their attention. I would enthusiastically recommend her to any firm.*

– Michael Robb, Partner, Board Member, and former Chief Inclusion Officer, Siskinds LLP

# Facilitator Bios

## Nikki Gershbain

Founder & CEO, IDEA Consulting Group



Nikki is a former family law lawyer with more than 25 years of experience in equity, inclusion, and corporate social responsibility as a litigator, C-suite executive, and non-profit leader. As the inaugural Chief Inclusion Officer at McCarthy Tétrault, she created the firm's market-leading, multiple award-winning Inclusion Now program. Since founding IDEA Consulting Group in 2022, Nikki has advised law firms, corporations, and other organizations on inclusive talent practices. She is widely considered a thought leader in law firm IDEA, and has delivered hundreds of keynote addresses and training programs on inclusion and professional decision-making in the legal sector.

**Together, Nikki and Maya bring subject-matter expertise and personal insight into the cultural dynamics that commonly arise in legal workplaces, including those shaped by race, religion, culture, nationality, sexual orientation, disability, and socioeconomic background.**

## Maya Kotob

Litigator & Cultural Competency Educator



Maya is a Canadian lawyer whose practice has spanned medical negligence, professional regulation, and commercial disputes. She has appeared before the Superior Court of Justice, the Ontario Court of Appeal, and the Supreme Court of Canada, as well as administrative and mental health tribunals. Maya has delivered cultural competency education to tribunal adjudicators, Law Society of Ontario Benchers, and other legal leaders, and has participated in student recruitment at two prominent Canadian law firms. Her work reflects both deep litigation experience and a sustained commitment to equity and inclusion.

**For more information about the program, please email [hello@ideaconsultinggroup.ca](mailto:hello@ideaconsultinggroup.ca)**