

Career Change for Lawyers in a Global Economy

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Select Trends

Outsourcing and Offshoring: hiring third party to perform work (outsourcing) and hiring own employees offshore to perform work (offshoring) will continue to grow in popularity, increasingly impacting lawyers' jobs

Personal Connections: remain vital despite technological advancements, but important to integrate technology into networking

Globalization: means ever increasing importance of cross cultural competence and global understanding of business trends

Versatility Increasingly Prized: indicates that employers want lawyers who are flexible, adaptable and versatile on the job; having both "general" and "specific niche" legal knowledge is a plus; as David Morley, Worldwide Managing Partner of Allen & Overy, told *TheLawyer.com* last October, "...we need to develop versatile lawyers capable of working in more than one discipline."

Multiple Jobs and Major Career Switches Common: increases importance of both self-assessment (to ensure that job/career change brings satisfaction) and personal branding (to communicate a lawyer's uniqueness and propel career forward)

Law Firm Structural Changes: continued mergers, emphasis on per partner profits, employment of business managerial staff, and strategies for responding to globalization remain key drivers

Deciding to Change Careers

Identify Reasons for Wanting Change: chart the specific reasons in detail, and rank them from greatest to least to get insight on what needs to change most urgently

Grapple with any Barriers to Change: including fear of losing prestige and lifestyle; fear that family, friends, clients and colleagues won't understand or support transition; fear of unknown; not understanding own financial situation; and Golden Handcuffs (see *How Lawyers Can Break Their Golden Handcuffs* by Janet H. Moore)

Set 3-5 Year Goals: “When you discover your mission, you will feel its demand. It will fill you with the burning desire to get to work on it,” said W. Clement Stone, author of *Success through a Positive Mental Attitude*; set and then work back from ultimate goal(s), setting incremental (yearly, monthly and perhaps weekly) goals in between

Conduct Self Assessment: gather objective feedback with tools like DiSC™, Meyers-Briggs™, StrengthsFinder™ etc...

Honestly Face Limitations: for example, if you are a wallflower, acknowledge that it will be hard to succeed at a daily courtroom practice, or if you are a woman, accept that practicing law in most parts of the Middle East will be at least daunting; many, but not all, limitations can be overcome with hard work

Analyze Possibilities: chart choices to compare systematically the pros and cons of your options, and formulate specific action steps

Preparing for Job Search and Interviews

Conduct Personal Branding Exercise: your “personal brand” is what comes to mind when others think of you; email 10-20 colleagues, peers and clients and ask them to respond with 5-10 words or phrases—both positive and negative—that describe you; strive to change unflattering traits, such as “tardy” or “self-centered”

Refresh Interview Skills through Videotaping: best tool for realizing personal habits; videotape yourself while giving speeches and mock job interviews; doing so prepares you for videoconference interviews, which are increasingly popular due to globalization

Amass References: especially those that support skills and talents desired by target employer(s)

Research “Culture”: because each potential employer has a culture, make sure you feel comfortable with it; also assess each employer’s plans for responding to globalization

Learn Fundamental Concepts and Jargon: as used in or by relevant legal specialty (e.g. in international practice, differences between civil and common law), specific industry (e.g. industry terminology commonly used in trade publications), potential employer (e.g. Wal-Mart executives rephrase “problems” as “opportunities”) and/or geographic location (e.g. Mexican Spanish compared with Argentine)

Seek Professional Assistance: if needed, seek help from a professional career counselor, lawyer coach, state bar or alumni career center

Create Accountability: have friend, colleague or coach hold you accountable for your job search progress

Create Needed Experience: review life experience, and think creatively about experience gained through non-traditional avenues like volunteering; bolster experience through volunteer work, pro bono and contract work, consulting work and the like; consider non-legal jobs to enhance other appreciated skills, like business skills

Networking

Network Daily: in a way that is comfortable for you and maximizes your strengths

Networking Defined: connecting—sharing knowledge and resources, time and energy, friends and associates, and empathy and compassion in a continual effort to provide **value to others** [emphasis added], while coincidentally increasing own value (Paraphrased from Keith Ferrazzi’s *Never Eat Alone*, page 8.)

Develop Portable Business: see the suggested books on rainmaking techniques below

Cultivate Cross-Cultural Communication Skills: prepare for interviewers, co-workers and clients from other cultures; become culturally facile by interacting regularly with people from foreign cultures, whether at stores, restaurants, or other public venues

Practice Quick Rapport: which is accomplished by making an immediate connection, demonstrating interest in another person, showing enthusiasm and interest, and the like

Contact “Weak Ties”: per Professor Mark Granovetter’s seminal monograph *Getting a Job*, asking for help from more distant, “weak” contacts puts you in touch with a broader, more diverse employer base

Connect with “Connectors”: as described in Malcolm Gladwell’s *Tipping Point*, connectors love to connect people to other people and resources, for the sheer joy of it; per *Never Eat Alone*, seek out typical super-connectors, like headhunters and lobbyists

Selected Resources

Career Change Books for Lawyers: *Changing Jobs: A Handbook for Lawyers in the New Millennium*, edited by Heidi McNeil Staudenmaier; *Nonlegal Careers for Lawyers*, edited by William Henslee and Gary Munneke; *Running from the Law: Why Good Lawyers are Getting Out of the Legal Profession* and *What Can You Do with a Law Degree?: A Lawyer's Guide to Alternatives Inside, Outside and Around the Law*, both by Deborah Arron; *The Lawyer's Career Change Handbook: More than 300 Things You Can Do with a Law Degree*, by Hindi Greenberg; and *The Right Moves: Job Search and Career Development Strategies for Lawyers* by Valerie Fontaine

Cross-Cultural Communication Books: *Cross-Cultural Management Communication* by Richard Mead; *Culture Shock* series; *Do's and Taboos Around the World* and *Gestures* by Roger Axtell; *How to Negotiate Anything with Anyone Anywhere Around the World* by Frank Acuff

Job Change Websites: www.careerjournal.com (maintained by *The Wall Street Journal*); www.law.com, www.findlaw.com and www.emplawyernet.com (targeting lawyers); www.careerstorm.com (career assessment tools); www.job-hunt.org (listing many of the Web's job resources); www.netshare.com (executive job postings)

Networking and Rainmaking Books: *Business Development for Lawyers: Strategies for Getting and Keeping Clients* by Sally Schmidt; *Instant Rapport* by Michael Brooks; *Never Eat Alone* by Keith Ferrazzi; *Rainmaking Made Simple* by Mark Maraia

Other: blogposts on Career Change on www.InternationalLawyerCoach.com; Newsletter available through International Lawyer Coach (www.InternationalLawyerCoach.com); *The Brand Called You* by Peter Montoya; *Going Global: A Guide to Growing an International Law Practice* by Janet H. Moore (tips, primarily for small firm and solo practitioners, about growing an international practice)