

The Business of Practicing Law in the Private Sector

The Business of Practicing Law: From the Law Firm Side

- Client Expectations
- Fewer Training Opportunities
- Earlier Specialization
- Flat Fees v. Billable Hours
- Compensation Structures (Lock-step v. Lock Step + Merit Based)

The Business of Practicing Law: From the Law Firm Side

Hiring Practices

- Changes in the way law firms recruit
- Smaller summer classes
 - Reduction in number of schools visited and students interviewed
- Shorter summer programs
- Delayed start dates for graduates

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Fall Recruiting

OCI Hiring Criteria – On Campus Recruiting

- Credentials (Academic Achievement & Relevant Experience)
- Intellectual (Analytical, Detail Orientated, Articulate, Sound Judgment)
- Interpersonal (Ethical, Independent, Self-Confident, and Team Player)
- Motivation (Committed, Initiative, Client Orientated)
- Interest in Firm (Ties to Geographic Area, Interest in Firm)

Did candidate have a legal job last summer? Yes or No

Did they receive an offer to return? Yes or No

If they did not receive an offer – why not?

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Fall Recruiting – After OCI

- The Call Back Process
- Huge investment of time and money
- Offer Process - Timeline and Challenges
- Move towards behavioral interviewing

- Sample call back interview questions

Describe the candidate's past accomplishments and challenges

Did you review the candidates writing sample? If yes, what were your impressions?

Candidate's area of interest

Practicing Law in the Public Interest/Public Sector – Hiring Criteria/Process

- Demonstrated commitment to the work/clients/mission of the organization
- Broad range of skills – which may include language skills, grant writing, lobbying, community organizing, media relations
- Competitive and complex hiring processes, which can include lengthy written applications and proposals, challenging interviews (which may include hypothetical and ethical questions) and letters of recommendation
- Passion and relevant experience is often more important than law school grades

Practicing Law: Training New Lawyers

Who should provide the practical training?

Law Schools?

Or Employers?

Curriculum Review

Professional skills development

What background and expertise do legal employers now seek in candidates?

- No longer seeking “traditional” student with liberal arts background
- Focus on candidates with real experience in a particular field— (business, finance, engineering, accounting, software, environment, social or human services, legislative, etc.) or who have worked with specific client groups (the indigent, immigrants, youth, laborers)

What the Changes Mean for Pre-Law Advising

- **Demographic Changes**
 - Increasing number of law students
 - Increasing cost of tuition
 - Slow growth after economic downturn
- **Law school should not be a default**
 - Students need to think about what they want to achieve – short and long-term? Costs?
 - What they can do to be a stronger law school applicant and better lawyer?
 - Whether they want to use a law degree in alternative field?

What the Changes Mean for Pre-Law Advising

Skills that make someone an effective law student/new lawyer

In addition to strong factual and legal research, writing, oral advocacy, problem solving and analytical skills - need:

- Leadership skills
- Creativity
- Relevant work experience and professional connections, which includes community service experience (that demonstrate genuine commitments and passions)
- Interpersonal skills – relationship building, listening
- Organizational and stress management skills
- Language skills – esp. for international and public interest work

Pre-Law Advising: What does the future hold for the Legal Profession?

- Some predict employment of lawyers to grow in the next decade at about the same rate as the rest of the economy
- Some areas that may be in demand include - healthcare, intellectual property, bankruptcy, consumer banking, corporate, environmental, immigration, elder law, juvenile defense
- Some services traditionally performed by new lawyers may increasingly be done by staff attorney/contract lawyers, paralegals, other professionals or outsourced.
- Complex work may require more specialization, advanced law degrees
- Work will increasingly be global in nature
- Fast pace of technology is continuing to increase client expectations
- There will be a need for broad range of skills, including business development /fundraising in the private and public sectors

Resources

- NALP – <http://www.nalp.org/>
 - NALP Bookstore
 - Jobs & JDs: Employment and Salaries of New Law Graduates, Class of 2009 (2010 Guide to be released shortly)
 - The Official Guide to Legal Specialties, Lisa Abrams, 2000
 - Law School Guide to Public Interest Careers, NALP, 2007
- Equal Justice Works - E-Guide to Law Schools - <http://equaljusticeworks.org/pre-law/guide>
- Should You Really Be A Lawyer?: The Guide To Smart Career Choices Before, During & After Law School, Schneider and Belsky, 2004

