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## Alternative Careers for Lawyers

BY NICHOLAS GAFFNEY ON JANUARY 14, 2015 ·

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Working for a traditional law firm is no longer considered the only career option for lawyers or for law students entering the professional arena. During an era abundant with new business models and options for work, lawyers and law students can look forward to robust possibilities for alternative careers.

In today's uncertain economic times, with budding lawyers facing a diminishing job market in traditional law practices, having alternative career options is necessary for aspiring lawyers. For practicing lawyers facing job loss, or who are burned out or dissatisfied with a traditional law practice, or for those just seeking new career adventures, navigating the wide terrain of alternative career opportunities can be exciting, but overwhelming.

Becoming knowledgeable and realistic about pursuing such options is necessary for success. This month's roundtable discussion includes a notable team of leaders offering lawyers and law students valuable insights and practical ways to make an alternative career a reality.



**Round Table Moderator:** Nicholas Gaffney (NG) is a member of the *Law Practice Today* Editorial Board and a veteran public relations practitioner.

### Our Panelists



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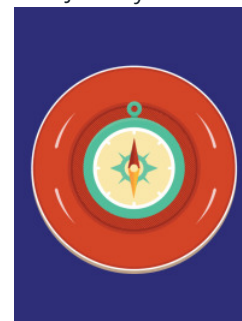
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THIS ISSUE OF LP TODAY

### The Alternative Careers Issue | January 2015



IN THIS ISSUE

MELawyering: Enhancing Career Opportunities  
Through Self-Advocacy

**Tad Borek (TB)** is a registered investment advisor and attorney based in San Francisco. His advisory practice focuses on investment management for individuals, complemented by tax and financial planning.



**Tonya Johnson-Fitzpatrick (TJF)** is an attorney, broadcaster, and leader in socially responsible travel and lifestyle. As founder of World Footprints Network, she also co-hosts the award-winning *World Footprints Radio Show*.

**Broc Romanek (BR)** is editor of *TheCorporateCounsel.net*, *CompensationStandards.com*, *DealLawyers.com* & *CorporateAffairs.tv*.



**NG: Did you ever practice law or consider practicing law, and if so what issues made you switch gears to pursue alternative options?**

**TB:** Really it was the weak job market for lawyers when I graduated in the early 1990s that led to the career path I've had. At a different time I might have ended up a patent lawyer or in-house at a technology company (I have an engineering background). I had a couple of unrelated jobs, but my current business developed from what I was doing on the side: advising friends and family on money issues.

**TJF:** I began my legal career as an assistant prosecutor and then moved to public interest law. While I enjoyed those opportunities, I quickly realized that career opportunities were limited, earning opportunities were low, and pursuit of a partnership track would require me to sacrifice more time than I was willing to commit.

After moving to Washington, D.C., I looked at federal opportunities and worked on a defense contract at the Department of Homeland Security as a senior legal advisor. I also worked for a congressman and was appointed to a senior executive service post as a deputy assistant secretary at the Department of Education under President George W. Bush. Those were stellar opportunities, but I knew I had another passion—travel. The passion for travel started with a successful travel agency and we've now evolved to an award-winning travel broadcast—*World Footprints*.

**BR:** Over 13 years, I experienced the trifecta of practice before I switched gears: law firms, in-house, and government. I started in the government working for the SEC, then I worked for two law firms, tried an entrepreneurial thing that flamed out quickly, and went back to the SEC. Then I went in-house at Lockheed Martin before I embarked on my alternative path.



**NG: Can you comment on your alternative career pursuits after law school—did you face a significant learning curve by not pursuing a traditional path to become a lawyer?**

**TB:** Absolutely. There was a lot to figure out, even just about licensing and business formation. Practicing law after school is usually straightforward—you'll probably get a job at an established firm. If you say "I'd like to advise people about money and investments," there are a lot of options. And you need to figure out the mundane things like office space, computers, etc.

## Turning Passion into Profession

How Jim Carrey, "Doing," and Twitter Helped Me Find My Non-Traditional Legal Job

Lawyers Who Connect Win the Talent Game

Forging a Legal Career in Hollywood

Finding the Right Career Path Can Be Taxing

Listen to Your Heart and Your Brain to Understand Your Path

Running the Millennial Marathon

Taking the Indirect Path

Developing a Peacemaking Law Practice

To Teach or Not to Teach, That is the Question

Making Law Enhance a Personal Passion—and a Career

Alternative Careers for Lawyers

Have You Considered Becoming a Law Librarian?

Interview With Courtney Ward-Reichard

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**TJF:** I have had to learn the art of broadcast journalism, production, and marketing from the ground up. Luckily, I'm always looking for personal and professional development opportunities, and since I'm a natural communicator, the learning curve has not been that steep.

**BR:** There is always a learning curve to anything you do that's new. If you attack it with passion, the curve can be overcome pretty quickly. For example, I launched a new site with just videos this year. I knew nothing about making videos. But I read several books and then reached out to folks who had such skills. My style has changed dramatically over the year and I now feel like I have a winning formula for making them.

**NG: Can you recommend any valuable resources that helped significantly in pursuing an alternative career path? Is having a career plan necessary?**

**TB:** I read a few good books about starting an investment advisory practice, and frequented the online discussion boards of several financial-industry publications. The same thing would apply to other careers—trade magazines and their websites can be very useful resources for learning about an industry and hearing from those in the business. LinkedIn wasn't around then, but no doubt that would be useful today for networking with people in whatever business you want to break into. People love to talk about what they do—I've met with quite a few future-advisors over the years.

As for a career plan, maybe you have one for the next couple years, but most people will change paths multiple times. If you have a plan, be prepared to toss it when you figure out something better.

**TJF:** One of my favorite resources for finding a mentor is *score.org*. That organization has been invaluable.

I think one should have a sense of direction. A point-by-point plan is not necessary because a plan will (and should always) evolve—that's part of the growth process.

**BR:** The most valuable resources for me have been the help of others. Don't be afraid to approach complete strangers who seem to have done what you think you want to do. More often than not, they are more than happy to help—and can help you avoid pitfalls that can really trip you up.

I don't believe in a career plan really. Often, you embark on a road and it takes you places you didn't know existed. If you're trying to get to a particular destination, you likely will have blinders on—and miss more valuable opportunities that pop up out of nowhere.

**NG: Do you find lawyers these days want more 'creative' careers? If so, what are some ways they might translate their skills toward more typically creative fields of work?**

**TB:** It's always been the case that many law-school graduates end up doing something other than practicing law, in part because a law firm doesn't suit them. For those who truly crave creativity, I think you should do something completely different. A classmate of mine writes for daytime TV. That's an extreme example though. Legal skill comprises reading, writing, and reasoning, and there are plenty of places to go with that.

**TJF:** A lot of lawyers I work with and have met over the years have pursued careers in writing, speaking, screenwriting, acting, etc. In Washington, D.C. there is a growing population of lawyers looking for more creative outlets. Another acquaintance actually turned his passion for baking into a successful cupcake shop and subsequently landed a Food Network show.

**BR:** Maybe lawyers want more creative careers—but they don't seem to act on them. For example, social media offers so many fresh opportunities for lawyers to express their creative side. Yet, so many of the legal blogs read like law firm memos. They're unbearable.

But on a positive note, that means there's ample opportunity for a lawyer willing to be creative on a blog or Twitter to quickly stand out. All they need to do is be themselves and not a zombie. Be human and your readers will connect with you. That's the purpose of marketing. Not hard to do!



**NG: What about lawyers who love law, but want alternative careers—what are some viable options for them?**

**TB:** That sounds like someone who should hang a shingle and practice law in whatever version of an alternative career they find appealing. If you love the law, be a lawyer—just do it on your own terms.

**TFJ:** I would suggest looking at opportunities within the areas they're passionate about. For example, one friend loves travel and she found a way to marry the law and travel by creating an adventure travel law firm. That is a highly niche practice but she is gaining broad recognition among adventure travelers and travel associations. In fact, she'll become a regular guest on my radio show, *World Footprints*. Other lawyers I know who love entertainment are working as entertainment lawyers and/or casting agents.

**BR:** The practice of law is quickly changing before our eyes. These alternative careers are not as alternative as one may think. But we are still in the early innings of a nine inning game. So there still is ample opportunity to get in on the ground floor.

Much of what I do requires my knowledge of corporate and securities law as I apply it in a nontraditional way. I wear many hats in running a bevy of web sites for the corporate law community. For example, I wear a journalism hat—writing blogs, conducting podcasts, and more. I have no journalism background at all. Never even took a course in college.

**NG: In what ways does your legal training benefit your current work, if any?**

**TB:** It wasn't my plan going in, but law school was an excellent preparation for doing what I do now, in part because of the electives I'd taken. You can cover a wide range of financial-planning topics at a depth you won't get elsewhere: tax, estate planning, securities and corporate finance, contracts, insurance, small business planning. I draw on this expertise regularly and focus on these areas with my CLE.

**TFJ:** The wonderful thing about being a lawyer is that my training is transferable. My husband is also a lawyer and we've used our skills to review contracts.

**BR:** For me, I couldn't do what I am doing without the corporate and securities law background that I have. In running this corporate law community, my ability to "talk the talk" is vitally important.

Many of our competitors hire "real" journalists—but they don't have a corporate and securities law background. The quality of our work is superior because we know the field intimately. And we are able to offer our customers many more features because we talk the same language.

**NG: What advice would you give to fresh law graduates who are considering an alternative career path?**

**TB:** If you are at all interested in personal finance, consider it as a career. I think it's an "undiscovered practice area" just waiting to be tapped.

**TFJ:** Do your research and develop a road map that will get you to the first step. That could be as simple as arranging an informational interview with a leader in the field you're interested in. Also, network, network, network, and don't be afraid to ask—if you don't ask, you don't get.

**BR:** Try your hand at social media starting right now. It takes a while to find your "voice" and better to do that while blogging about sports or cats before you do so in your field. Social media continues to be a main way to distinguish yourself from others seeking jobs. When I look at a resume that has no social media indicia, I feel like I'm back in the '80s. That's not a good thing.

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# THRILLABLE HOURS: CAREER CHANGE, FEAR, AND LIFE AFTER LAW

When I quit my job as a corporate lawyer in 2008, I thought that I was taking a one year sabbatical to travel around the world. I never expected that this blog, something I started to keep my family and friends updated about where I was going, would turn into a bigger project, and eventually a new career. I also never thought I would be aggregating a 'law after law' case study series, to help people find alternative careers for lawyers.

I called the series Thrillable Hours — a play on billable hours, which I found hilarious (and non-lawyers found baffling) — and the fruit of my efforts are at the bottom of this page. I posed the same 5 questions for each former attorney to ask them how they saw the world today. The interview also asked each participant to provide advice for people seeking to leave the law. Where should they begin? How to navigate that kind of change?

But as Legal Nomads grew, I received more and more emails from lawyers and law students confused about what options existed for them with their background. Some were miserable, some were bored, others were just curious. My own leap into a much less structured career was one that fellow lawyers wanted to emulate or evolve from, and I built this resource page to help lawyers look for alternative careers, or reframe their education in untraditional ways.

## Alternative Careers for Lawyers: Contents

Career Change and Facing Fear

Resources to Support a Law Career Change

Resources: Books and Articles to Support a Law Career Change

Case Studies of Life After Law

## Career Change and Facing Fear

But the series wasn't enough for my resources, because while case studies are helpful most of us need something more constructive. Personally, before I quit my job as a lawyer I focused on checklists and preparedness — stuff that helped me feel a bit safer in my decision to turn my back on being an attorney.

Preparing took the form of reading books and articles from lawyers-turned-whatevers, but more importantly to focus on understanding what my fears were and how to face them without letting them control me.

## The Questions to Ask yourself Before you Change Careers

**Most important one: what is your worst case scenario?** When readers who *aren't* lawyers write to ask me about career change and fear, I often go back to this series of questions about risk assessment. Once you've got a handle on worst case scenarios, your fears eclipse a lot less of your heart and mind. This means asking yourself:

- What scares you most about changing careers?
- What do you gain most? This can be personality-based or lifestyle, or more.
- What's the worst case scenario if things go pearshaped, and (this is important!) what skills do you have to mitigate that worst case from happening?

I'm not of the "find your passion and take the leap" school of thought. I have a draft rant on this topic, but until I hit publish see Cal Newport, who summarizes it well in his The Passion Trap (<http://calnewport.com/blog/2010/10/16/the-passion-trap-how-the-search-for-your-lifes-work-is-making-your-working-life-miserable/>) essay. While it may *look* like I did just leap into the unknown and say fuck it to the man, what actually happened is that I saved up to take a sabbatical. During that trip, this blog took off, I got offers for freelance writing, and a new career began to take shape. Because I did some risk assessment first, I wasn't in a panic when that happened.

The critical parts of that process were:

- Figuring out what I could happily invest more time in learning how to do better / become more of an expert at doing.
- Figuring out how good I would need to get in order to leverage that skill to build the life I wanted. (For me, this meant working for myself, not going into an office, and being able to eat as much street food as possible (<https://www.legalnomads.com/street-food/>).)
- Continuously trying to learn from experts about growing a business that was new to me.
- Understand what my worst case was (for me, becoming a lawyer again – which is still a 'better case' than many).

## How to Figure Out What to Do in Your Life? Paint Drop Method from Taylor Pearson

Taylor Pearson wrote a post in April 2019 about how people can figure out what they should do with their lives. Even if went through that process to become a lawyer, you're on this page because you may want a change. Among his advice is to keep asking yourself important questions, such as "what do you do well?" and "what do you find interesting?" while seeking a Venn-diagram overlap between the two *and* the very important question of "what will people pay for?"

To do so, he focuses primarily on skillset.

Check out his full piece here (<https://taylorpearson.me/what-should-i-do-with-my-life/>) to try the Paint Drop Method for yourself.

## Resources: Books and Articles to Support a Law Career Change

### Books About Alternative Careers for Lawyers

- Life After Law: Finding Work You Love with the J.D. You Have (<https://amzn.to/2Z4faYR>), by Liz Brown (2013). Book summary: the book "provides specific, realistic, and honest advice on alternative careers for lawyers. Unlike generic career guides, Life After Law shows lawyers how to reframe their legal experience to their competitive advantage, no matter how long they have been in or out of practice, to find work they truly love."

- *The Unhappy Lawyer: A Roadmap to Finding Meaningful Work Outside of the Law* (<https://amzn.to/2DcmgkF>), by Monica Parker (2008). Book Summary: "The Unhappy Lawyer will help you uncover exciting alternative careers with a unique step-by-step program that will make you feel like you have your very own career coach. With chapters containing real letters from lawyers who are desperate to leave the practice of law, tales from lawyers who have shut the door on their legal careers, and powerful exercises."
- *Leaving Law: How Other's Did It and You Can Too* (<http://amzn.to/2sRv1JD>), by Adele Barlow (2015. Note, I worked with Adele at Escape the City). Book Summary: "This is the ultimate companion for lawyers who want to escape their profession but are sceptical about career counsellors. It is based on years of experience helping hundreds of confused lawyers at Escape the City, a community of motivated corporate professionals who want to do something different with their careers."
- *The Official Guide to Legal Specialties (Career Guides)* ([http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/0159003911/ref=as\\_li\\_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=0159003911&linkCode=as2&tag=leganoma-20&linkId=CGZVHB4O2SZWTUF7](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/0159003911/ref=as_li_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=0159003911&linkCode=as2&tag=leganoma-20&linkId=CGZVHB4O2SZWTUF7)), by the National Association of Law Placement (2008). Book Summary: "An inside look at what it's like to practice law in 30 major specialty areas, including appellate practice, entertainment, immigration, international, tax, and telecommunications. This book gives you the insights and expertise of top practitioners-the issues they tackle every day, the people and clients they work with, what they find rewarding about their work, and what classes or work experience you need to follow in their footsteps."
- *24 Hours with 24 Lawyers: Profiles of Traditional and Non-Traditional Careers* (<https://amzn.to/2D88gbz>), by Jasper Kim (2011). Book Summary: "This book gives you a unique "all-access pass" into the real-world, real-time personal and professional lives of twenty-four law school graduates. These working professionals each present you with a "profile" chronicling a typical twenty-four-hour day in their traditional and non-traditional careers."
- *What Color Is Your Parachute? A Practical Manual for Job-Hunters and Career-Changers* (<http://amzn.to/2vdrz7>), by Richard N. Bolles (2017) *Newly updated*; Included in this section instead of above as this is the world's most popular job-search book.
- *The Creative Lawyer: A Practical Guide to Authentic Professional Satisfaction Paperback* ([http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/1590318439/ref=as\\_li\\_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=1590318439&linkCode=as2&tag=leganoma-20&linkId=K4ZOHX7RYGX3JVMS](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/1590318439/ref=as_li_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=1590318439&linkCode=as2&tag=leganoma-20&linkId=K4ZOHX7RYGX3JVMS)), by Michael F. Melcher (2007). Book Summary: "Starting with self examination, readers will be able to analyze their personal values and then create their own personal fulfillment plan. Create a step-by-step plan for life and career that will get you back on track with your personal definition of happiness with this important book."
- *The new 'What Can You Do with a Law Degree?'* ([http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/0940675714/ref=as\\_li\\_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=0940675714&linkCode=as2&tag=leganoma-20&linkId=4MGRRLH3V2NJK2B](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/0940675714/ref=as_li_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=0940675714&linkCode=as2&tag=leganoma-20&linkId=4MGRRLH3V2NJK2B)) book, by Larry Richard (2012). Note: more expensive textbook pricing for this book. Book Summary: "This book contains career exercises, practical career-finding techniques, and a compendium of 800+ ways to use your law degree inside, outside or around the law."



- Lawyer, Interrupted (<https://amzn.to/2lem6xa>): Successfully Transitioning from the Practice of Law—and Back Again (2015), by Amy Impellizzeri. From Amazon: “This book covers both the practical and ethical considerations for lawyers taking a break in service for a variety of (voluntary and involuntary) reasons, including temporary leaves of absence, taking care of family, changing careers, disciplinary actions, and retirement.”
- Given the rates of addiction and depression in the law (see Vice Mag's anonymous piece here ([https://www.vice.com/en\\_us/article/an-inside-look-at-the-depressed-substance-abusing-world-of-law](https://www.vice.com/en_us/article/an-inside-look-at-the-depressed-substance-abusing-world-of-law))), I wanted to also include Brian Cuban's The Addicted Lawyer (<http://amzn.to/2mXtLUN>).

## Books About Career Change / Creativity:

- The War of Art: Break Through the Blocks & Win Your Inner Creative Battles (<http://amzn.to/2tf6NIG>), by Steven Pressfield. I've found creativity and fear are two sides of a very similar, shiny coin. This book helps you get more comfortable with that gnawing fear of impending change, because (as Pressfield argues) that fear is actually a very good sign — it tells us what comes next. The more scared we are of what we are excited about work-wise, the more we need to give it a shot. Instead of being held back by that deep, powerful resistance, Pressfield tells us to face it head on.
- The ONE Thing: The Surprisingly Simple Truth Behind Extraordinary Results (<http://amzn.to/2ujHCJY>), by Gary Keller and Jay Papasan. I'm including this one because lawyers have a good, trained tendency to focus on all of the aggregate problems or obstacles — it's what we're paid to do, after all. But in times of change, you need to reframe with narrower focus so as not to drown yourself in anxiety. The premise is simple: in a world with dizzying amounts of options and distractions, those who can focus will achieve meaning and depth that is unparalleled.
- Designing Your Life: How to Build a Well-Lived, Joyful Life (<http://amzn.to/2uf6vpF>), by Bill Burnett and Dave Evans. The premise of the book can be boiled down to: when we get mired in problems that seem unsolvable, we need to reframe our relationship to them and try again. The book gives you tools to do that, and ways to craft a life that is fulfilling and meaningful regardless of our myriad backgrounds. While personal mindset matters most, the I found the book interesting at providing practical ways to rethink big problems like “what is the life I want to lead?”
- Pivot: The Only Move is the One You Make Next (<http://amzn.to/2teOTWK>), by Jenny Blake. This book is — as the title would suggest — all about the pivot, a startup term that can also apply to changing our lives. Blake, a public speaker and career coach, aggregates her advice about taking small steps to move in new directions and modify goals and careers in the process. Actionable and interesting.
- How to Be Everything (<https://amzn.to/2Q6wWpV>), by Emilie Wapnick. Having a lot of different interests, projects and curiosities is something I was told “makes you an all-around gymnast — not a gold medal winner. Wapnick, who studied law at McGill University, argues that the narrowed experience theory is an outdated one. Instead, she urges people with many creative pursuits (multipotentialites, in her words) to leverage that diversity and passion as their biggest strength. The book teaches you how to build a life that you love, not because you ‘follow your passion’ but because you come into who you really are — which allows you to find meaning in whatever work you do.
- For a bit of spirituality braided in, see Design the Life You Love: A Step-by-Step Guide to Building a Meaningful Future, (<http://amzn.to/2teTCYr>) by Ayse Birsel. It's an interactive

journal – which may not appeal to all of my readers! But if doodling and listicles help you think stronger, this may be a good start for getting a better handle on changes you want to me.

- **Big Magic: Creative Living Beyond Fear** (<http://amzn.to/1PhInoC>), by Elizabeth Gilbert. Some may argue that this book belongs elsewhere but I firmly believe that entrepreneurs and changemakers need to have a strong and brave creative streak, and this book speaks directly to creative pursuits in a linear world.
- Seth Godin's **Linchpin** (<http://amzn.to/1U5WYXI>), about making yourself indispensable in creating new businesses and products, and **Purple Cow** (<http://amzn.to/1U5X4OY>), about transforming your business to make it remarkable, are both highly recommended. From **Linchpin**: “Your art is what you do when no one can tell you exactly how to do it. Your art is the act of taking personal responsibility, challenging the status quo, and changing people.”



For more books and resources relating to entrepreneurship and location independent work, please see **here** (<https://www.legalnomads.com/digital-nomads/>).

## Blog Posts about Fear and Resilience:

- Tim Ferriss' Fear Setting exercises (<http://tim.blog/2017/05/15/fear-setting/>), with good questions to ask before undertaking decisions you're afraid of. Bonus: the interview is with Hans Keeling, a former lawyer.
- Strategies for Overcoming Fears of Change and Failing (<http://careers.findlaw.com/law-career-management/strategies-for-overcoming-fears-of-change-and-failing.html>) *FindLaw* (This is an excerpt **Career Change: Everything You Need to Know to Meet New Challenges and Take Control of Your Career** (<http://amzn.to/2u9q96G>), by David P. Helfand)
- How can I face my fear of making a career change (<https://www.greenbiz.com/blog/2014/02/10/dear-shannon-how-can-i-face-my-fear-making-career-change>)? A list of questions relating to fear.
- Five Science-Backed Strategies to Build Resilience ([https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/five\\_science\\_backed\\_strategies\\_to\\_build\\_resilience](https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/five_science_backed_strategies_to_build_resilience)). 12 of resilience practices (squeezed into five categories), which can help you confront life changes more skillfully. Building resilience through mindfulness and habits is an excellent backstop to career transition, as it allows you to act from certain place, one less clouded by fear.

(For those not seeking a change at the moment, check out Associate Mind's long list of online resources for new lawyers (<http://associatesmind.com/online-resources-for-new-lawyers/>), from books to articles and much more, as well as Hastings College of Law's **New Models of Legal Practice** (<https://worklifelaw.org/publications/Disruptive-Innovations-New-Models-of-Legal-Practice-webNEW.pdf>) publication.)

## Resources and Articles to Support an Alternative Law Job

There are also a few other sites around the web that provide resources for lawyers seeking a career change:

- Georgetown Law's alternative careers page (<https://www.law.georgetown.edu/careers/career-planning/private-sector-settings/alternative.cfm>).
- The Canadian Bar Association's alternative careers page ([http://www.cba.org/cba/practicelink/careerbuilders\\_advancement/alternatives.aspx](http://www.cba.org/cba/practicelink/careerbuilders_advancement/alternatives.aspx)).
- Life After Law's job board (<http://www.lifeafterlaw.com/opportunities.php>).
- Non-Lawyer Jobs for Lawyers (<http://law.scu.edu/careers/career-pathways/non-lawyer-jobs-for-lawyers>) from Santa Clara Law School.
- 60 Alternative Jobs to Being a Lawyer (<http://www.lawcrossing.com/article/900042904/60-Nontraditional-Jobs-You-Can-Do-with-a-Law-Degree-and-Should-Strongly-Consider-Doing/>) from Law Crossing.
- The American Bar Association's advice for tackling an alternative career ([http://www.americanbar.org/news/abanews/aba-news-archives/2014/02/advice\\_on\\_tacklings.html](http://www.americanbar.org/news/abanews/aba-news-archives/2014/02/advice_on_tacklings.html)), as well as their career center's 2017 video about career changes and alternative tracks for lawyers (<http://www.abalcc.org/2017/01/31/video-career-advice-series-choosing-and-pursuing-alternative-careers/>).
- University of Toledo's list of resources for nontraditional law careers options (<http://www.utoledo.edu/law/career-services/nontraditional.html>).
- Loyola University School of Law's alternative law careers resources page (<http://www.luc.edu/law/career/alternative.html>) (several resources in here).
- Life After Law: What to Do When You Don't Want to Be a Lawyer Anymore (<https://www.themuse.com/advice/life-after-law-what-to-do-when-you-dont-want-to-be-a-lawyer-anymore>), by fellow McGill grad Devo Ritter.
- National Associates for Law Placement has a few PDFs of note, including on emerging legal jobs (<http://www.nalp.org/uploads/2015EmergingLegalJobsFinalReport.pdf>). The others are here (<http://www.nalp.org/handoutsoncareerissues>).
- "Alternative Uses for Your Law Degree" (<http://www.mobar.org/uploadedFiles/Home/Publications/Precedent/2015/Winter/alternative-careers.pdf>) – article from the Missouri Bar Association.
- Escape the City's job listings board (<http://www.escapethecity.org/opportunities>) for many alternative careers that don't involve a fixed location.

## Case Studies of Life After Law

- I wrote a piece in 2015 on Redbook about why I quit my job to travel (<http://redbookmag.com/life/news/a21948/i-quit-my-high-paying-job-as-a-lawyer-to-travel-and-its-not-all-sunshine-and-rainbows/>), and what to think about if you are considering doing the same.
- Simply Sweet Justice has a long, loooong list of lawyers who are now bakers here (<http://www.simplysweetjustice.com/p/lawyers-turned-bakers.html>). Seriously, there are a LOT of lawyers who became bakers.
- Above the Law's Alternative Careers page (<http://abovethelaw.com/career-alternatives/>).

**I hope this series is helpful. I know I have learned a lot from the interviewees, and look forward to continuing to interview and highlight these smart and interesting people.**

(<https://www.legalnomads.com/mofad-peter-kim/>)

**Thrillable Hours:  
Peter J. Kim, Executive Director of the  
Museum of Food and Drink  
(<https://www.legalnomads.com/mofad-peter-kim/>)**

Peter J. Kim walked away from a lucrative law job at Debevoise & Plimpton LLP to work as the Executive Director for the Museum of Food and Drink in NYC.

Continue Reading → (<https://www.legalnomads.com/mofad-peter-kim/>)

(<https://www.legalnomads.com/karen-walrond/>)

**Thrillable Hours:  
Karen Walrond, Speaker, Photographer  
& Bestselling Author  
(<https://www.legalnomads.com/karen-walrond/>)**

New Thrillable Hours Q&A about life after law with Karen Walrond, a former lawyer. Now, Karen is a public speaker, photographer, and bestselling author.

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(<https://www.legalnomads.com/matt-levine/>)

**Thrillable Hours:  
Matt Levine, Financial Journalist  
(<https://www.legalnomads.com/matt-levine/>)**

The next in my alternative careers for lawyers series: interview with financial journalist Matt Levine, now writing for Bloomberg View.

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(<https://www.legalnomads.com/alternative-careers-lebawit-lily-girma/>)

**Thrillable Hours:  
Lebawit Lily Girma, Author and  
Photographer  
(<https://www.legalnomads.com/alternative-careers-lebawit-lily-girma/>)**

The next in my alternative careers for lawyers series: interview with guidebook author and photographer Lebawit Lily Girma.

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## Best alternative legal careers

Submitted by **Hillary Mantis** on Tue, 04/15/2014 - 8:12am



Whether we are in good economic times or bad, lawyers have always been curious about non-traditional legal careers. You would like to use your J.D., but you don't necessarily want to be a litigator or a corporate lawyer.

What are your options?

Here are some of the hot alternative legal careers trending right now, as discussed at a recent panel held by the New York State Bar Association's Lawyers in Transition Committee. The panel featured four lawyers who have transitioned into different career paths.

## Government Relations

Jonathan Bing has what many would consider a dream job. He is a partner at a large law firm in New York, Wilson Elser, Moskowitz, Edelman & Dicker. And he spends much of his time working on governmental affairs matters for the firm.

Bing landed his position after serving as a New York State Assemblyman in Manhattan for five terms, and working as the Special Deputy Superintendent for the New York Liquidation Bureau. Bing, a graduate of New York University School of Law, recommends that those interested in government affairs get involved in volunteer political organizations, and use networking sites such as LinkedIn, to make connections.

## Banking

Stephanie Melowsky, a banker with a J.D., joined CMS Bank as a Vice President of Small Business and Commercial Lending. She plays a key role in the Bank's outreach to local attorneys, as well as continuing to build the commercial loan portfolio.

A graduate of Pace University School of Law, Melowsky has chosen to use her law degree for a career in banking. She enjoys the client relations aspect of the job, as well as the extra knowledge her J.D. gives her when advising clients. Melowsky, who enjoys marketing, has found that combining banking with law is a perfect fit. For others interested in banking, she recommends joining associations that serve the banking and real estate communities, and using LinkedIn to find others in the same field.

Melowsky's career parallels the choice of other lawyers, who have used their J.D. to find positions that are traditionally held by M.B.A.'s, such as banking, management consulting, and investment banking.



# Academia

Have you ever thought about working at the law school you attended? Pace University School of Law graduate Crystal Barrow has —she is the Assistant Dean for Career and Professional Development at Pace. Prior to transitioning into a career in academia, Barrow worked for many years as a litigator, including a stint with the New York State Attorney General's office, and with the Bronx County District Attorney's Office.

Barrow graduated from Pace University with her J.D. in 2004, and returned last year to assume the position of Assistant Dean. She recommends that those interested in following in her footsteps into a career in academia network through LinkedIn, and check out web sites such as Higheredjobs.com and the Chronicle of Higher Education.

Law schools have J.D.'s working in administrative and teaching positions in many different departments. Schools often like to hire alums for internal positions, so it makes sense to stay involved with your own alma mater, and network with them, if you are interested in a career in academia.

# Appellate Services

Tina Fisher, Senior Appellate Counsel at Appeal Tech, in New York City, has been called the appellate guru by her clients and colleagues. Her firm provides appellate services to many law firms. She assists the legal community in perfecting appeals by answering a wide array of procedural questions that arise during the course of litigation. Her company also handles the compiling, reproducing, serving and filing of all appellate documents.

If Fisher's job sounds appealing (so to speak), you should try to become knowledgeable about appellate work. Consider also that there are many other types of vendors to the legal profession, who provide services such as computer services and jury consulting. Also check out companies like Lexis, Westlaw, and Bloomberg, for positions that provide services to lawyers and law firms.

For more information, watch the full [webcast of the NYSBA Alternative Legal Careers Panel](#).

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