Book Review

A Handbook for Career Transitions

by Vielka V. Holness, Esq.


Hindi Greenberg’s The Lawyer’s Career Change Handbook: More Than 300 Things You Can Do With a Law Degree is a great workbook for those considering a transition from traditional law practice and for those just getting started on the path to their legal careers. Ms. Greenberg is a former business litigator who in 1985 started Lawyers in Transition™ to assist attorneys in obtaining satisfying career objectives both within and outside of the law. Based in San Francisco, she has provided her consulting services and presented programs nationally in a variety of venues. It is this experience in career counseling and assessment that Ms. Greenberg brings to The Lawyer’s Career Change Handbook.

This handbook first addresses the needs of current and potential lawyers for taking stock of their career objectives and current situations. Readers are presented with a variety of assessment exercises. Some are formal quizzes, others probe more subtly. A variety of issues are dealt with including personality preferences and their impact on job satisfaction and practice area choice, familial and cultural expectations, financial viability of career goals, and the counselor’s triumvirate — skills, values, and interests. This is by far my favorite of the three sections of the book. We all know too many attorneys who are dissatisfied with their current jobs who would have benefitted from evaluating their skills, interests, and values and making an informed decision about practice area or career goals based on the outcome of this kind of assessment.

Once readers have evaluated their strengths, they are presented with the second portion of the book, More Than 300 Things You Can Do With a Law Degree. These chapters are packed with information on a wide variety of possible career objectives within, related to, and outside of the law. Following each segment identifying several career possibilities is a listing of periodicals, books, and other resources for further research and information gathering. These resource guides cast a fairly wide net over the existing literature. The last several chapters cover several basic job search issues such as creating effective résumés and cover letters, refining interviewing skills, and engaging in networking and informational interviews. Resource lists follow each segment.

The strength of this book lies in its easily accessible style and in the depth of the first two sections, which provide assistance on self-assessment and identification of potential career goals. The evaluations are varied in form and allow the reader to skip around without missing an important link. The hundreds of career possibilities are especially helpful in identifying possibilities for those who are stymied by the perennial question: “What do I want to do when I grow up?”

The Lawyer’s Career Change Handbook would be a helpful addition to the libraries of all lawyers considering a transition, law students sorting out possible areas of practice, and law school career services libraries.

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