



NALP 2011 Annual Education Conference

April 27 - 30, 2011, Palm Springs, CA

Alternative Careers: Now more than ever

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Pass the Baton llc

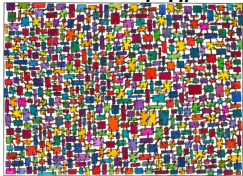


Susan Gainen...

in addition to **PASSTHEBATONLLC...**

- 17 years in the of U of MN law career office
- 7 years legal headhunter
- 1 year law practice
- 10 years food/car sales
- 16 credits library science
- Typesetter (2x)

- Principal – *nanoscapes & other visions, llc*
 - Original watercolors



Getting the most out of this fast-paced short program

Expectations:

- Alternative career searches are like barbecue – not ramen noodles.
- An alternative career search is individual. What is fascinating to you could be brain-crunching to your pals.
- This program is a door-opener, not an individual blueprint.

• **Ask questions. Today. By email.**



Today

Why are you here?
 What is an "alternative career?"
 Why is a law-trained person a good hire?
 How do I manage "Frozen Moment?"
 What are the impediments?
 How can you get past them?
 What do you have to explain?

Why do I want an alternative career?

- I knew when I came to law school that I didn't want to practice law.
- I am a (1L/2L/3L/4L). I have never worked and now I want an alternative career.
- I am graduating and I want an alternative career.
- There are no jobs – I want an alternative career.



Why do I want an alternative career?

- I have been practicing for (a period of time) and I want to do something else.
- I hate private practice. I hate public practice.
- I hate my job.
- Writing makes me crazy.
- Deadlines drive me nuts.
- I hate being around lawyers.



Why do I want an alternative career?

- I hated 1st year moot court. I don't want to be a litigator so I can't be a lawyer – right?
- I don't know much about law practice, and I want to keep my options open.
- *Law practice isn't fun (anymore).*
- I hate arguing over nothing.
- I hate my life.
- And on, and on... **ALL GOOD REASONS**



Keeping Options Open Has Its Limits



DEFINITIONS

Traditional Careers
Non-traditional Careers
True Alternative Careers

Wildly misunderstood statement:

Go to law school – it will open every door



Short list of non-traditional careers **YOU HAVE A LONG LIST**

- Environmental consultant
- Headhunter for lawyers
- City manager
- Jury selection consultant
- Legal publishing (West)
- Legal blogging
- Financial planner
- Board of Education
- Lobbyist
- Dependent care consultant
- Academic administration
- Forensic accounting
- Court TV or on-air reporter
- Bar Association management
- CLE administrator
- Law firm marketing
- Development director
- Health care administration
- Non-profit executive director
- Litigation support manager
- Contracts administration
- Risk management
- Law librarian
- Human resources

Why hire a law trained person?

Do people know what lawyers do?



***Usually – no
Or***



***They think that they know
But
They are usually wrong***

Why hire a law-trained person?

The **signature skills** which attract employers are:

IRAC/Writing & analysis (make a coherent narrative from a bushel basket of facts)

Leadership and advocacy (lead a group to a conclusion and bring them to action)

An employee's manifesto

Keep the enterprise from doing things that are:

- Stupid
- Illegal
- Embarrassing
- Expensive

Law training gives you a special filter for these.

What is on the table?

Know what you “bring to the table”

AND

Know what is on the table

Mac & Cheese for Lactose Intolerant?



Know the benefits Be prepared to sell them

- *Sell the benefits of hiring your training*
- *Know who is buying before you try to sell.*

JD: Hammer or multi-tool?



Needle-nose pliers
 Regular pliers
 Wire cutters
 Hard wire cutters
 Crimper
 154cm Clip-point knife
 Serrated knife
 Cutting hook
 Saw, Wood/metal file
 Diamond-coated file
 Two large bit drivers
 Large & Small bit driver
 Ruler (inch/cm)
 Bottle/can opener
 Wire stripper
 Fixed lanyard
 Quick-release Lanyard Ring
 Removable pocket clip



Frustrations in the search?

- No one believes that I can do the work.
- Why do they harp on quantitative skills?
- They seem skeptical about lawyers in general.
- They hate lawyers.
- How can I make them see that I am not one of "those" lawyers?



Alternative Careers Caveat:
**They are all someone else's
 traditional career**

Human Resources Director could have:

BA & MA & PhD:

HR Development
 Personnel
 Industrial Relations
 Org Development

Law Degree:

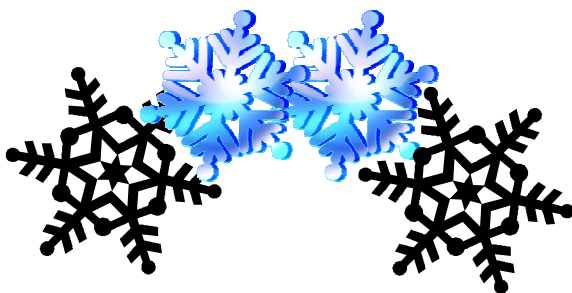
Possible coursework
 in employment, labor,
 ADR, benefits, ERISA

From a long HR job posting...

**Specialized training in employment law,
 compensation, organizational planning,
 organization development, employee
 relations, safety, training, and preventive
 labor relations, preferred.**

This sounds like a lawyer.

Manage "Frozen Moment"



Typical question:

What's out there?

More nuanced question:

What's out there for me?



The hardest question:

What do you really want to do?



What is your dream?

Do you need a new dream?

Basic career development Q&A

- What are your:
 - Interests and skills
 - Financial commitments
- Who are prospective employers?
- Who might have info that could help?
- How do you approach these people?

Three questions for **ANY** career development

1. What kind of a problem solver am I?
2. What kind of problem do I want to solve?
3. Who can pay me to solve the problem?



Strategy & tactics



- Information interviewing with humility
- Purposeful and serendipitous networking
- Know the literature of the sector that interests you...

If you aren't interested enough to do basic research, you are unlikely to be any employer's 1st choice.

What documents do you need?

A legal resume may be *very* wrong.

Your undergraduate career office can help with specialized industry knowledge.

What should your cover letter show?

You know the industry.
 You know the business.
 You know some key business and industry issues.
 You know how you can assist because you have learned what "they" need.

When you face a job description...

DO NOT LEAD WITH YOUR 'LAWYER' FOOT

Each word in the job description should be mirrored in your resume and/or cover letter.

Although I have never done X, I have done Y, which is very similar....

Where are the job postings



- Busy HR professionals who might net 1 or 2 candidates a decade at a law school will post elsewhere or be fired.
- Professional literature, websites, employer Facebook pages and twitter feeds.
- Search out professional associations' job boards.

Three key questions

Can you take a pay cut? 
*Can you really stop being called
 "lawyer"?*
 Are you ready to explain this to
 your family?

A word about serendipity


Lottery Tickets ≠ Financial Planning
Serendipity ≠ career planning
 But don't ignore hare-brained schemes...

Why are YOU a bonus hire?

- You can patiently & enthusiastically explain why a law-trained person (YOU) are a bonus.
- You will engage in life-long learning.
- You willing learn on your own time & on your own dime.



From Pooh's Little Instruction Book...

***You can't stand in your corner
of the forest waiting for others
to come to you.***

***You have to go to them
sometimes.***





Questions?

**Today. Now.
Later. Email.**

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