

Alternative Careers: For counselors without secret job drawers

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A note to NALPers

- Slides 13 and 24 have material that will help you present the program. Don't forget to delete them.
- Slide 13 is a screenshot of one of the 13-page handout that you can make available in paper or electronically to your students to give them some concrete examples of alternative paths.
- Slide 24 is the text for “Frozen Moment.”

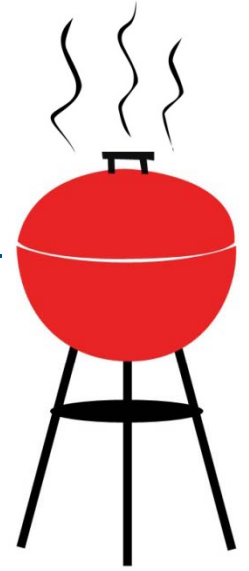
Susan Gainen...

in addition to **PASS THE BATON LLC...**

- 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)
- **Beyond PASS THE BATON**
 - *nanoscapes & other visions, llc* (abstract watercolors)
 - *small friends* (whimsical creature watercolors); author, "Small Friends' Chronicles"; Lost Cave Paintings of Saint Paul
 - *susan-cooks! llc* (blog & cooking school)



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 appalling to your pals.
- This program is a door-opener, not an individual blueprint.

- **This is a marathon, not a sprint.**



Today

Why are you here?

What is an “alternative career?”

Why is a law-trained person a good hire?

How do you manage “Frozen Moment?”

What are the impediments?

How can you get past them?

What do you have to explain?



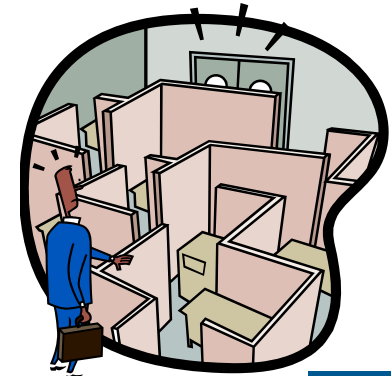
Why do I want an alternative career?

- 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. I want an alternative career.
- *There are no jobs. I want an alternative career.*
- I have never talked to CSO, but 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



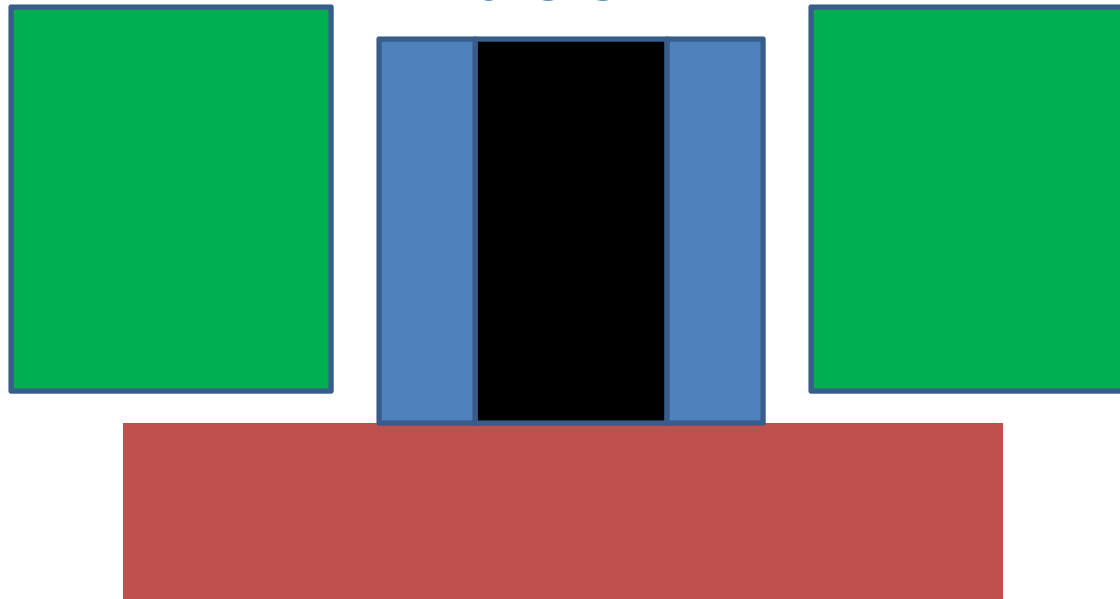
DEFINITIONS

Traditional Careers
Non-traditional Careers
True Alternative Careers



Wildly misconstrued 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 (print/electronic)
- 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



A useful handout



Pass the Baton, LLC

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NON-TRADITIONAL JOBS FOR LAW-TRAINED PROFESSIONALS

At the 1996 National Association for Law Placement Annual Meeting, two career services directors* reported on a survey that they had conducted of a number of their graduates who had alternative careers. Some of the "Helpful Background" reflects the specific experiences of the survey's respondents. I have added additional job titles to their very excellent work and included an additional list of job titles. You will find some consistent themes: just as in traditional legal positions, key skills are writing, analysis, communication and interpersonal skills. Their categories are:

Alternative Dispute Resolution
Arts/Media
Corporate
Education
Financial Services

Government
Fund Development (Institutional Advancement)
HR/Recruitment
Legislation/Lobbying
Non-Profit Management

ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION Mediator (Small ADR Company)

FUNCTIONS: Mediates disputes

SKILLS: negotiation, mediation, fact analysis, issues ID, ability to distinguish fact patterns, aware of risks & liabilities

QUALIFICATIONS - MINIMUM/PREFERRED: B.A. /interpersonal skills

HELPFUL BACKGROUND: Substantive training in a specific practice, government practice, mediation training

Executive director (Non-profit mediation service)

FUNCTIONS: Oversee & administer all activities, promote services, manage & train staff, mediate & facilitate negotiations

SKILLS: Negotiation/mediation, persuasion, general legal knowledge, work independently, presentation skills, leadership and management

QUALIFICATIONS - MINIMUM/PREFERRED: Management and fundraising experience/ J.D.

HELPFUL BACKGROUND: ADR courses and clinics in law school, litigation in private practice

This handout is 9 pages long and students find it comforting because it has a lot of concrete examples.

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:

1. **IRAC/Writing & analysis** (make a coherent narrative from a bushel basket of facts)
2. **Leadership and advocacy** (lead a group to a conclusion and bring them to action)
3. **Trained written & oral communicator**



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 & perspective.*
- *Know who is buying before you try to sell.*

* “Sell” = educate



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



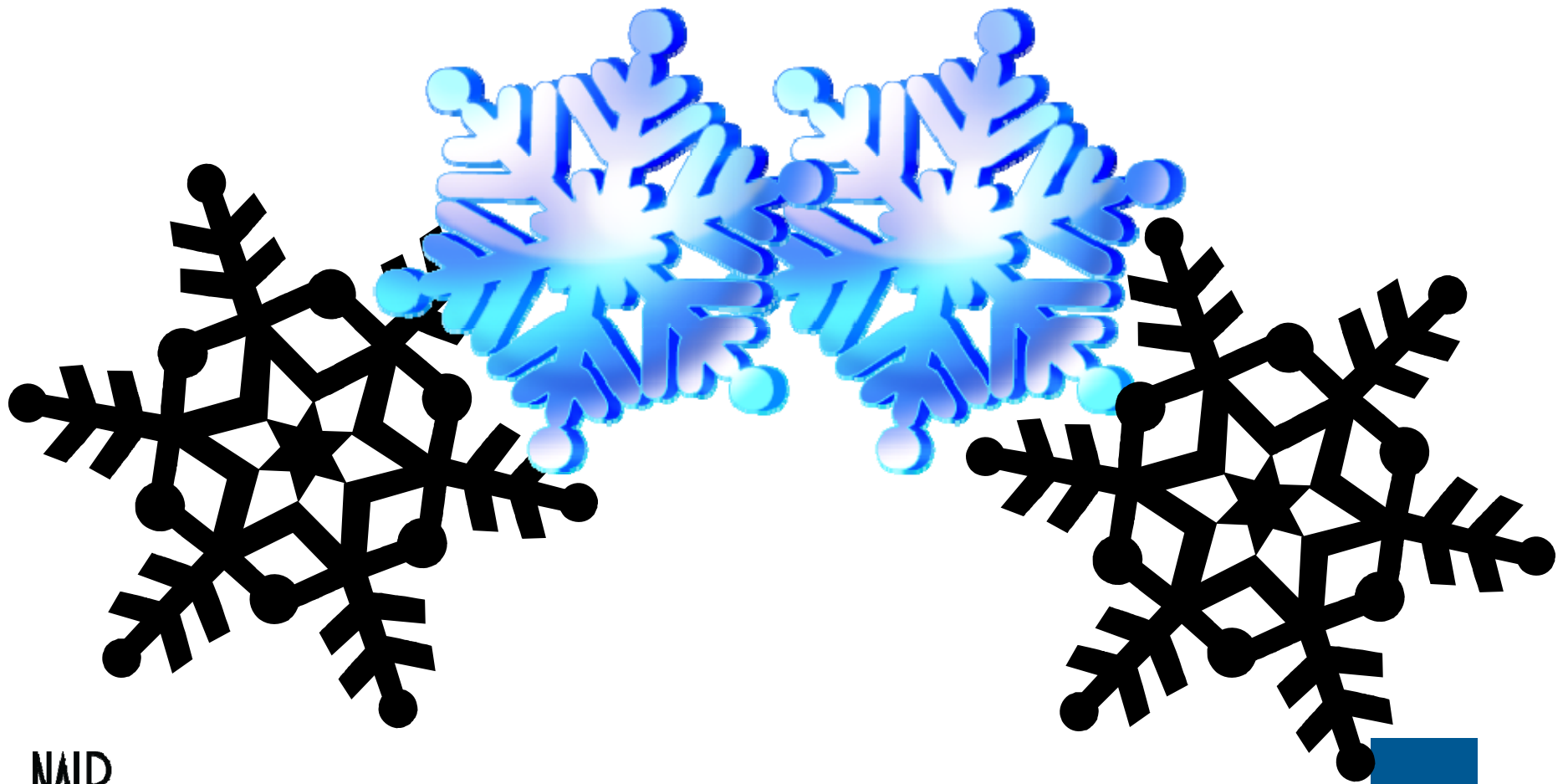
From a long HR job posting...

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”



Frozen Moment: unpacked

I don't like what I do and I don't know what else to do and I only know what I do and I don't like it enough to keep doing it and I don't know what other people do and I don't know how to find out what other people do and what will my friends and family think if they find out that I don't like what I do and where can I go to find things out because nobody has ever had these feelings ever ever before.



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 information that could help?
- How do you approach these people?





You cannot outsource
actively
answering
these questions.



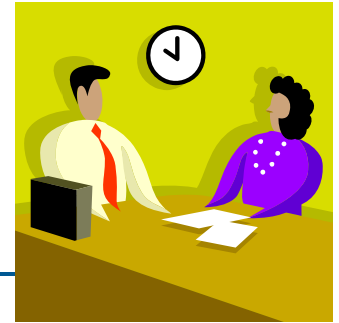
Three questions

*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
- Attend professional meetings (live, webinar...)
- Immersing yourself in 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.

Use Google to find specific industry guides.

Trust but verify.



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.
- **Networking** contacts make referrals.



Three key questions



If practicing, 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 $\neq$ Financial Planning

Serendipity $\neq$ 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 are willing to engage in life-long learning.
- You are willing to learn on your own time and 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.

Make an appointment.

Susan Gainen

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