

Alternative Careers for Lawyers and Law Grads

While most law grads go into the practice of law, some students know early on that they don't want to practice. Others will leave the practice of law after realizing that it is not a good fit. Having a law degree can open a lot of doors and enhance your general marketability. You will, however, have to do some research to figure out exactly where you fit in.

A law degree can bring the following skills to non-legal jobs:

- Enhanced analytical skills
- Enhanced communication skills
- Research and writing skills
- Critical thinking and organizational skills
- Ability to work under pressure

Alternative Careers for lawyers and law grads fall into two basic categories; JD strongly preferred and JD provides added value.

Some examples of JD Strongly preferred careers:

- legal publishing
- court administration
- law library services and legal education
- hearing officer/ADR specialist

Some examples of jobs where a JD brings added value:

- business and entrepreneurship
- financial services
- human resources
- politics and legislative affairs
- insurance/risk management

Self-assessment is critical in determining what kind of alternative career is for you. If you are a creative type, then a legal publishing or teaching job might be for you. If you need excitement in your job, finance, real estate or some other form of entrepreneurship might be for you. You might start your inquiry at one of the following web-based resources for self-assessment:

- www.humanmetrics.com
- www.jobhuntersbible.com
- online.onetcenter.org

Perhaps the best way to enter an alternative career is to practice law for several years and then begin your transition. A deeper understanding of the practice of law brings credibility to your decision to pursue an alternative career. Practicing for a period of time will also solidify many legal skills, and provides the opportunity to develop networks that can be helpful when making the switch to an alternative legal career.