



HOW TO FIND SATISFYING JOBS AND CAREERS

Many lawyers who contact the OAAP for help in changing jobs and careers initially hope we have the name of a job placement expert who will solve their problem quickly. Unfortunately, it doesn't work that way for about 95 percent of job applicants.

Job placement research has shown that approximately 80 percent of new job opportunities are never advertised. Only 10 percent are found through advertised and published positions, and another 10 to 15 percent through job placement agencies. **About 70 percent of new jobs are found through networking and personal contacts.** A recent survey by the Drake, Beam, Morin placement agency found that 64 percent of executives and managers who recently started new jobs found their positions through networking and personal contacts, while 4 percent found them through the Internet.

Individuals who are the most successful in finding satisfying positions first take time to clarify who they are and what type of work or work setting fits them. Before formally applying for specific positions, successful job and career changers spend considerable time talking with, and getting information and advice from, others about jobs and work-settings.

The OAAP has several tools to offer lawyers and law students who are working to determine which practice area, work setting, job or career will fit them best. The Myers-Briggs personality inventory can help identify general personality preferences and how these preferences relate to jobs and careers. The SkillScan card-sort exercise helps identify the skills a person prefers using most. The Strong Interest Inventory can be a helpful exercise in exploring opportunities outside traditional legal practice. These resources are widely used in the career-counseling field to help individuals identify

jobs or careers that may best fit them. None of these approaches are a psychological test designed to identify problems or weaknesses.

In the current information age there are many resources, including the Internet, to help a person research jobs and careers identified by the self-assessment process. However, none of these resources should replace informational interviews with individuals currently in the practice area or field of interest.

In her book, *IT'S WHO YOU KNOW, The Magic of Networking in Person and on the Internet*, Cynthia Chin-Lee explains that when conducting an informational interview:

- Your goal is to learn about the industry and profession.
- You do not need to sell yourself as the right candidate for a particular job.
- You are asking questions and talking only twenty percent of the time.
- The person you are interviewing is sharing experience, opinions and expertise, not selling a firm or company.

As earlier noted, 70 percent of new jobs are found through networking and personal contacts. Therefore, once you have targeted a particular practice area, firm, work-setting, or industry, networking should become a primary tool in your job search.

Most people find it very uncomfortable to contact their current network of family, friends and acquaintances, let alone complete strangers, and ask for assistance. Lawyers as a group are even more reluctant to do so. Yet if informational interviewing and networking are utilized honestly, respectfully, and professionally, they may become the path to your next job.

The OAAP is one of the resources available to lawyers and law students who are exploring a job or career change or actively in job or career transition. For more information, call the OAAP at 503-226-1057.

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