



## 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

### ARTS/MEDIA

#### Associate Publisher (Legal monthly newspaper)

**FUNCTIONS:** Promotions and PR, advertising, sales, selection of editorial features; some writing for the publications

**SKILLS:** Writing, issues identification, negotiation, teamwork, presentation skills

**QUALIFICATIONS - MINIMUM/PREFERRED:** Sales experience/ Legal network

**HELPFUL BACKGROUND:** Law firm practices, conference and corporate sales; communications experience

**Marketing director (Private health care provider)**

**FUNCTIONS:** Marketing, PR to estate planning professionals, in-house education for health-care managers

**SKILLS:** Legal knowledge (T&E), legal terminology, risk awareness, risk management, issues identification, leadership & management

**QUALIFICATIONS - MINIMUM/PREFERRED:** Banking experience/ JD

**HELPFUL BACKGROUND:** Public finance, bank trust experience, marketing experience

**Managing director (Theatrical Production Company)**

**FUNCTIONS:** Promotions, financial planning, writing, performing

**SKILLS:** Writing, risk awareness, general legal knowledge, rules and regulations, interpreting contracts, leadership & management

**QUALIFICATIONS - MINIMUM/PREFERRED:** Some experience in arts /tenacity, faith & confidence

**HELPFUL BACKGROUND:** B.A. and M.A. in theater, artist or agent experience

**CORPORATE**

**Assistant director (Bar Review Company)**

**FUNCTIONS:** Personnel, sales promotion, management, administration, technology development

**SKILLS:** Negotiation/mediation, presentation skills, persuasion, teamwork, ability to work independently

**QUALIFICATIONS - MINIMUM/PREFERRED:** JD / self-motivated, excellent interpersonal skills

**HELPFUL BACKGROUND:** Sales experience, student rep for law-related products

**International Tax Manager (Large Corporation)**

**FUNCTIONS:** Research US and foreign tax law; coordinate transactions; advise HR on international compensation; tax planning; tax return preparation

**SKILLS:** Issues identification; writing ability, research skills, teamwork, ability to distinguish fact patterns, leadership skills, management experience

**QUALIFICATIONS - MINIMUM/PREFERRED:** 5 years international tax experience, CPA, advanced degree (JD or MS Tax or MBA)

**HELPFUL BACKGROUND:** CPA, law clerk in large corporate tax department, tax consulting with large accounting firm

**Program Manager (Large Computer Corporation)**

**FUNCTIONS:** Personnel and budget management; negotiate government contracts

**SKILLS:** Negotiation, drafting, leadership and teamwork

**QUALIFICATIONS - MINIMUM/PREFERRED:** B.A. & experience with a corporation / MBA

**HELPFUL BACKGROUND:** Coursework in financial management and planning; government contracts; contracts administration

**Property Records (Department Store)**

**FUNCTIONS:** Analyze, interpret & draft leases and operating agreements; manage finance agreements, track documents for commercial property transactions

**SKILLS:** Negotiation/mediation, familiarity with legal terms, general legal knowledge, research skills, writing ability

**QUALIFICATIONS - MINIMUM/PREFERRED:** B.A. + 3-5 years real estate experience / JD

**HELPFUL BACKGROUND:** Law clerk for the employer or experience at another real estate practice

**Regional Sales Coordinator (Software Company)**

**FUNCTIONS:** Sales & account management for a law-school-related product

**SKILLS:** Negotiation/mediation, presentation skills, persuasion, teamwork, work independently, leadership & management

**QUALIFICATIONS - MINIMUM/PREFERRED:** - /knowledge of law school experience

**HELPFUL BACKGROUND:** judicial law clerk, private practice, sales with other law-related computer company

### **VP Corporate Finance (Hospital)**

**FUNCTIONS:** Capital structure management; oversee M&A; financial planning, manage joint venture investments

**SKILLS:** Teamwork, presentation skills, writing ability, issues identification, persuasion, leadership & management

**QUALIFICATIONS - MINIMUM/PREFERRED:** Business degree, 4-6 years financial experience

**HELPFUL BACKGROUND:** Legal corporate experience or investment banking, CPA; BS economics; MBA with emphasis in health care; lower level corporate positions with hospitals; director of corporate planning

### **EDUCATION**

#### **Assistant to the Dean (Public University)**

**FUNCTIONS:** Grievance officer; faculty advocate in grievance proceedings; administrative management

**SKILLS:** Negotiation/mediation, fact analysis, teamwork, counseling, persuasion

**QUALIFICATIONS - MINIMUM/PREFERRED:** Master's degree (or JD); administrative experience, oral & written communication skills/ Political savvy, knowledge of university grievance procedures

**HELPFUL BACKGROUND:** Doctoral coursework

#### **Director, Professional Development Centers & Institutes (Graduate Business School)**

**FUNCTIONS:** Provide leadership for non-degree professional programs; develops programs, courses and outreach activities; fundraising

**SKILLS:** Negotiation/mediation; ability to distinguish fact patterns; issues identification; fact analysis, fundraising, leadership & management

**QUALIFICATIONS - MINIMUM/PREFERRED:** Advanced degree; understanding of life-long learning process, experience in various organizational settings

**HELPFUL BACKGROUND:** Leadership and management

#### **Program Attorney (Continuing Legal Education Provider)**

**FUNCTIONS:** Plan, market, budget, present CLE seminars

**SKILLS:** Persuasion, issues identification, presentation skills, general legal knowledge

**QUALIFICATIONS - MINIMUM/PREFERRED:** Some adult education experience

**HELPFUL BACKGROUND:** JD

#### **Practicum Coordinator (Law School)**

**FUNCTIONS:** Schedule and coordinate student placements; student counseling; document management; interface with faculty

**SKILLS:** Work independently; fact analysis; issues identification; ability to distinguish fact patterns; personal skills, leadership & management

**QUALIFICATIONS - MINIMUM/PREFERRED:** Computer proficiency; complex project management experience; communication & problem solving skills / knowledge of legal process & court procedures or JD

**HELPFUL BACKGROUND:** Administrative assistant experience; student manager of a law school clinic

### **FINANCIAL SERVICES**

#### **VP Financial Planning (Large Bank)**

**FUNCTIONS:** Estate and financial planning in trusts & estates department

**SKILLS:** Issue identification, fact analysis, and presentation skills, work independently, interpret contracts, rules and regulations, leadership & management

**QUALIFICATIONS - MINIMUM/PREFERRED:** JD, financial planning experience

**HELPFUL BACKGROUND:** solo practice, judicial law clerking, LLM in tax, NASD registered representative

#### **VP Financial Planning Officer (Trust Company)**

**FUNCTIONS:** Financial planning, client presentations, create financial products, insurance underwriting and compliance, general legal knowledge

**SKILLS:** Issues identification, writing ability, fact analysis, work independently, general legal knowledge, leadership & management

**QUALIFICATIONS - MINIMUM/PREFERRED:** Insurance experience / JD or CPA

**HELPFUL BACKGROUND:** Life insurance underwriter, marketing department of an insurance company

#### **Senior Vice President, Indirect Products (Large Bank)**

**FUNCTIONS:** Sales management, product development, marketing

**SKILLS:** Negotiation/mediation, awareness of risks, liability, persuasion, presentation skills, leadership & management

**QUALIFICATIONS - MINIMUM/PREFERRED:** MBA or finance, or management experience / JD

**HELPFUL BACKGROUND:** Commercial loan group manager, indirect products manager

#### **Partner (CPA Firm)**

**FUNCTIONS:** Personnel/firm management, tax planning, business development

**SKILLS:** Ability to distinguish fact patterns, awareness of risk, liability, fact analysis, general legal knowledge, teamwork, leadership & management

**QUALIFICATIONS - MINIMUM/PREFERRED:** CPA, accounting degree / MS Tax or JD

**HELPFUL BACKGROUND:** Accounting degree, solo law practice, CPA

#### **Claim Representative (Small Insurance Company)**

**FUNCTIONS:** Case management of malpractice claims, hire defense counsel, negotiate settlements, and draft legal documents

**SKILLS:** General legal knowledge, negotiation/mediation, issues identification, writing ability, fact analysis

**QUALIFICATIONS - MINIMUM/PREFERRED:** JD or solid grasp of legal principles and proceedings

**HELPFUL BACKGROUND:** Personal injury paralegal, private practice in a small firm

#### **Client Service Representative (Trust Corporation)**

**FUNCTIONS:** Administrative review, pension planning

**SKILLS:** Interpret contracts, rules and regulations; general legal knowledge, familiarity with legal terms, teamwork, work independently

**QUALIFICATIONS - MINIMUM/PREFERRED:** JD

**HELPFUL BACKGROUND:** Solo practice, instructor in a community college paralegal program, MBA with emphasis in employee benefits

#### **SR. VP, Insurance Services (Small Corporation)**

**FUNCTIONS:** Management, legal advising, government regulations, regulatory compliance

**SKILLS:** Interpret contracts, rules and regulations, negotiation/mediation; presentation skills; writing ability; issue identification

**QUALIFICATIONS - MINIMUM/PREFERRED:** Insurance & business law classes, BA / JD, CPCU-CLU designation, experience w/insurance products & regs

**HELPFUL BACKGROUND:** Private practice; state department of insurance, real estate practice

#### **VP Loan Review (Regional Bank Holding Company)**

**FUNCTIONS:** Supervise staff, monitor loan portfolios, credit administration

**SKILLS:** Awareness of risk/liability; issue identification; ability to distinguish fact patterns, writing ability, fact analysis, leadership & management

**QUALIFICATIONS - MINIMUM/PREFERRED:** BA in business or accounting; credit experience / computer proficiency

**HELPFUL BACKGROUND:** MBA, commercial lending training with a bank or financial institution, credit officer, workout specialist

## **FUND DEVELOPMENT**

### **Major Gifts Officer (Non-profit social service)**

**FUNCTIONS:** Fundraising, advisor to investment committee

**SKILLS:** Negotiation/mediation, presentation skills, writing ability, persuasive skills, counseling, leadership & management

**QUALIFICATIONS - MINIMUM/PREFERRED:** Sales experience; commitment to the mission of the non-profit / Estate planning and tax experience

**HELPFUL BACKGROUND:** Private practice, securities license, stockbroker

### **Senior Gift Planner (Foundation)**

**FUNCTIONS:** Donor gift planning, endowment building

**SKILLS:** Presentation skills, fact analysis, counseling, working independently; awareness of risk and liabilities

**QUALIFICATIONS - MINIMUM/PREFERRED:** Commitment to the mission of the supported agencies; BA in business, finance / JD

**HELPFUL BACKGROUND:** Non-profit volunteer experience (including fundraising), tax associate/supervisor at a CPA firm; private practice

### **Director of Alumni Giving and Development (University)**

**FUNCTIONS:** Planning and coordinating alumni/ae activities, fundraising, developing planned giving campaigns

**SKILLS:** Writing ability, persuasive skills, presentation skills, working independently, teamwork. Leadership & management

**QUALIFICATIONS - MINIMUM/PREFERRED:** BA / MA or JD

**HELPFUL BACKGROUND:** Judicial law clerk, health care contract analyst, graduate work in public administration

### **Director of Gift Planning (University)**

**FUNCTIONS:** Marketing, counseling and advising, administering planning giving program

**SKILLS:** General legal knowledge, interpreting rules, contracts and regulations, excellent interpersonal skills

**QUALIFICATIONS - MINIMUM/PREFERRED:** Law degree, estate or financial planning experience

**HELPFUL BACKGROUND:** Earned PhD, private practice

## **GOVERNMENT**

### **Director of Labor Relations (City)**

**FUNCTIONS:** Establish strategy and negotiate agreements, representative in grievance arbitration proceedings

**SKILLS:** Negotiation/mediation; interpret contracts, rules & regulations; risk awareness & management, presentation skills, persuasive skills; supervisory skills

**QUALIFICATIONS - MINIMUM/PREFERRED:** Management advocate / labor contract negotiation experience

**HELPFUL BACKGROUND:** Intermediary for a national labor organization; labor mediator (corporate, state or county)

### **Executive Director (Legislative Commission)**

**FUNCTIONS:** Advocacy, research, legislative affairs

**SKILLS:** (none provided)

**QUALIFICATIONS - MINIMUM/PREFERRED:** (none provided)

**HELPFUL BACKGROUND:** Political activity, community organizing, legal services advocacy

### **Advisor/Writer (Federal Appeals Office)**

**FUNCTIONS:** Advise judicial officers and write decisions on outcomes relating to disability appeals

**SKILLS:** Fact analysis; writing ability; working independently, persuasion, general legal knowledge, time management skills

**QUALIFICATIONS - MINIMUM/PREFERRED:** Paralegal training / JD

**HELPFUL BACKGROUND:** Disability casework while clerking for a Magistrate; disability insurance experience

**Program Consultant (State social services agency)**

**FUNCTIONS:** Policy and program development, contract administration/negotiation, training  
**SKILLS:** Writing; issue identification; interpret contract, rules & regulations; teamwork, presentation skills  
**QUALIFICATIONS - MINIMUM/PREFERRED:** BSW or MSW, communication skills, training experience / JD  
**HELPFUL BACKGROUND:** BSW, *guardian ad litem* training, trial advocacy experience

**Financial Officer (State)**

**FUNCTIONS:** Oversee expenditure of and accountability for public funds  
**SKILLS:** Negotiation, mediation, presentation skills, teamwork, issues identification, financial management, leadership & management  
**QUALIFICATIONS - MINIMUM/PREFERRED:** (none stated)  
**HELPFUL BACKGROUND:** City attorney, private legal practice, CPA

**Affirmative Action Director (City government)**

**FUNCTIONS:** Management training in EEO law and diversity issues; develop programs to recruit/retain diverse employees; assist dispute resolution  
**SKILLS:** Counseling, persuasion, presentation skills, issue identification, ability to distinguish fact patterns, leadership & management  
**QUALIFICATIONS - MINIMUM/PREFERRED:** Human rights administration; HR experience, industrial relations / employment law  
**HELPFUL BACKGROUND:** EEO offices for state department; BA with business law emphasis

**Director, Child Support Enforcement (Division of a state agency)**

**FUNCTIONS:** Program and budget management; long-term planning; interface with state, federal and county efforts; supervise a large staff  
**SKILLS:** Issues identification; presentation skills, risk awareness and management; work independently; supervise  
**QUALIFICATIONS - MINIMUM/PREFERRED:** Ability to formulate public policy; work with diverse constituencies / management experience, legal knowledge  
(child support enforcement)  
**HELPFUL BACKGROUND:** Community organizing; counsel for state legislative committee, children's advocacy agency

**Court Administrator (State appellate court)**

**FUNCTIONS:** Supervision, management, carry out directions and implement policy made by the legislature and Supreme Court  
**SKILLS:** Supervision, interpersonal skills, negotiation/mediation, project management  
**QUALIFICATIONS - MINIMUM/PREFERRED:** BA / JD management experience  
**HELPFUL BACKGROUND:** Legal practice, graduate degree, teaching experience

**HR/RECRUITMENT**

**Search Consultant (Professional recruitment agency)**

**FUNCTIONS:** Client and business development  
**SKILLS:** Negotiation/mediation, working independently, persuasion, counseling, leadership, familiarity with legal terminology and all aspects of law practice  
**QUALIFICATIONS - MINIMUM/PREFERRED:** Paralegal or JD training / Legal practice experience  
**HELPFUL BACKGROUND:** Significant number of years of legal practice; close connections to the local legal community

**Owner, President (Legal Placement Agency)**

**FUNCTIONS:** Management, financial operations, marketing and sales, strategic planning, supervision  
**SKILLS:** Persuasion, general legal knowledge, counseling, issues identification. Leadership & management  
**QUALIFICATIONS - MINIMUM/PREFERRED:** Entrepreneurial vision  
**HELPFUL BACKGROUND:** Law firm or other legal practice; human resources experience

**Placement Director (Legal Staffing Agency)**

**FUNCTIONS:** Sales, marketing, recruitment

**SKILLS:** Negotiation/mediation, presentation, general legal knowledge, counseling, leadership & management

**QUALIFICATIONS - MINIMUM/PREFERRED:** Genuine enthusiasm for lawyers and law students; entrepreneurial & communication skills, sales & marketing experience / JD, legal experience

**HELPFUL BACKGROUND:** Owned and operated a small business, law firm experience

**Career Services Director (Law School)**

**FUNCTIONS:** Manage career development program for students & alumni; outreach to employers; communication with faculty and staff

**SKILLS:** Ability to multi-task; negotiation/counseling; oral and written communication skills; high level of comfort with technology in the recruitment process

**QUALIFICATIONS - MINIMUM/PREFERRED:** Genuine enthusiasm for law students and lawyers; JD or MS Counseling / law practice, legal staffing or counseling experience

**HELPFUL BACKGROUND:** Law Practice (public or private); significant counseling experience

**Recruitment Manager (Large National Law Firm)**

**FUNCTIONS:** Training, marketing, recruitment, create & manage summer associate program; create and manage professional development (skills) training program

**SKILLS:** Vision, teamwork, supervisory experience; budget management; presentation, written and oral communication skills; high level of comfort with the technological side of recruiting, leadership & management from the middle

**QUALIFICATIONS - MINIMUM/PREFERRED:** B.A. / JD with practice experience

**HELPFUL BACKGROUND:** Legal practice, law school career services; bar association administration

**Manager, Employee Relations (Large Corporation)**

**FUNCTIONS:** Mediation, arbitration, negotiate/resolve discrimination and harassment cases; develop training programs

**SKILLS:** Negotiation/mediation; issue identification; fact analysis; distinguish fact patterns; counseling; management, leadership

**QUALIFICATIONS - MINIMUM/PREFERRED:** 7+ years leadership experience; excellent judgment, strong interpersonal skills / MAIR, human resources exp.

**HELPFUL BACKGROUND:** MBA; mediation training; other non-legal positions with corporate employers

**President (Management & Career Consulting Firm)**

**FUNCTIONS:** Small business management; career counseling; employee training, marketing training

**SKILLS:** leadership, management, budgeting, strategic planning

**QUALIFICATIONS - MINIMUM/PREFERRED:** Small business experience, counseling, marketing / JD and legal network

**HELPFUL BACKGROUND:** Legal practice, solo practice, counseling training, extensive human rights advocacy, extensive professional associate development; deep knowledge of law as a business

**LEGISLATION/LOBBYING**

**Government Relations Assistant (Foundations' Association)**

**FUNCTIONS:** Monitor federal legislation; write column and newsletter; organize lobbying and networking activities; advise regarding government and law-related activities

**SKILLS:** Understanding of legislative process; writing ability; strong analytical and advocacy skills, leadership & management

**QUALIFICATIONS - MINIMUM/PREFERRED:** Hill experience (even as an intern) / JD or public policy degree or training

**HELPFUL BACKGROUND:** Attorney for a nonprofit; solo practice; agency experience

### **Lobbyist (Lobbying Corporation)**

**FUNCTIONS:** Represent corporate clients at state legislature

**SKILLS:** Teamwork, persuasion; general legal knowledge, presentation skills; issues identification

**QUALIFICATIONS - MINIMUM/PREFERRED:** BA with legislative experience (even as an intern) / JD or public policy degree or training

**HELPFUL BACKGROUND:** Political science major; staff member for elected representative

### **Director of Public Affairs (State Bar Association)**

**FUNCTIONS:** Develop and administer programs; fundraising; coordinate legislative agenda

**SKILLS:** Work independently; writing ability; issues identification; presentation skills; teamwork

**QUALIFICATIONS - MINIMUM/PREFERRED:** Fundraising background; knowledge of legislative process, experience managing volunteers / JD

**HELPFUL BACKGROUND:** Assistant director of organizational development and training; legal education and mock trial coordinator

### **NON-PROFIT MANAGEMENT**

#### **Director, National training Project (Resource association for child care providers)**

**FUNCTIONS:** Advise/educate child care providers on tax preparation and business issues

**SKILLS:** Presentation, writing, persuasion, counseling, ability to work independently, leadership & management

**QUALIFICATIONS - MINIMUM/PREFERRED:** Broad knowledge of tax law, writing and speaking skills / JD

**HELPFUL BACKGROUND:** Advocacy experience

#### **Executive Director (Conservation Agency)**

**FUNCTIONS:** Management; administration; fundraising

**SKILLS:** Negotiation/Mediation; writing ability; issue identification; general legal knowledge; presentation skills, leadership & management

**QUALIFICATIONS - MINIMUM/PREFERRED:** Land transaction experience; communication skills / fundraising experience; organizational skills; JD

**HELPFUL BACKGROUND:** Title insurance experience; private law practice

#### **VP Community Relations (Philanthropic Organization)**

**FUNCTIONS:** Work w/ corps, churches, and politicians to establish public/private partnerships; leverage investments; create strategies to improve quality of life

**SKILLS:** Critical/conceptual thinking; issues identification; presentation; teamwork, persuasion, leadership & management

**QUALIFICATIONS - MINIMUM/PREFERRED:** none listed

**HELPFUL BACKGROUND:** Program management; resource allocation; graduate degree in public administration (community economic development)

#### **President (State Association of Non-Profits)**

**FUNCTIONS:** Government relations

**SKILLS:** negotiation/mediation, writing ability; issue identification; fact analysis; leadership and management

**QUALIFICATIONS - MINIMUM/PREFERRED:** Social service management experience / government relations experience

**HELPFUL BACKGROUND:** Graduate degree; public administration (finance); JD; state senate staff

#### **Project Director (National Charitable Organization)**

**FUNCTIONS:** Liaison between health care and social service providers

**SKILLS:** Negotiation/mediation; presentation skills; fact analysis; leadership and management

**QUALIFICATIONS - MINIMUM/PREFERRED:** none listed

**HELPFUL BACKGROUND:** Master's in Public Policy; foundation fellowship; non-profit board service; private practice – estate planning

**Director, Special Funds (Professional attorney association)**

**FUNCTIONS:** Implement and staff policy oriented projects; administrative support for task forces and committees

**SKILLS:** Presentation; issues identification; teamwork; persuasion

**QUALIFICATIONS - MINIMUM/PREFERRED:** JD

**HELPFUL BACKGROUND:** Legal practice, staff support for Supreme Court task force; lobbyist for social services agency

**ADDITIONAL JOB TITLES**

Academic administration  
Accounting firm: litigation support  
Alumni relations  
Bar association management  
Board of Education (staff)  
City manager  
CLE administrator  
Consultant on dependent care  
Contract administration  
Court TV writer, producer staff

Environmental consultant  
Financial planner  
Health care administration  
Jury selection consultant  
Law librarian  
Legal publishing (Thomson West; Lexis, others)  
Risk management (insurance)  
Strategic Policy Analyst

*Thanks to Joyce Laher (then Director of Career Services at Hamline Law School; now retired) and Gina Sauer (then Assistant Dean for Career Services at William Mitchell College of Law; now Director of Recruiting and Professional Development at Oppenheimer Wolff & Donnelly in Minneapolis.)*

Pass the Baton, llc



Susan Gainen / 1390 Carling Drive #207, St. Paul, MN 55108 / 651-917-0219 / [susan@passthebaton.biz](mailto:susan@passthebaton.biz)

© Susan Gainen 2013