



Career Doctor

NALINI MOORE, MAHLAB
Nalini.Moore@mahlab.com.au

Dear Career Doctor

I have recently completed my articles, after years of study at university. I am not entirely sure what I want to do next year. I have shown interest in staying on at the firm that I am currently employed at, however I am not sure that I will accept a first-year position if it is offered to me.

What options are there for someone in my position? I presume that law graduates are well placed to pursue career paths other than working in a law firm, or is this my only real option?

Please help!

Lost and Confused

Dear Lost and Confused

Try not to be so pessimistic. Another way of looking at this scenario is to think how lucky you are – after completing your law degree and articulated clerkship, you now have a number of options available to you.

Undertaking an articulated clerkship and working in law in private practice is only one option that young lawyers have to choose from. From my experience, young lawyers have entered many other fields, including academia, inhouse, government, general management, politics, marketing, human resources and recruitment.

As a recruitment consultant, I am often asked by young lawyers what their options are. To assist you in your quest to find the right option for you (at your current level), I've set out some suggestions below:

Postgraduate study is becoming more popular. If you have a very firm idea about what area you would like to practise in (whether it is in private practice, in-house or government), you could undertake further studies in that particular area to make yourself more attractive to specific employers.

Another increasingly popular option is working as an inhouse lawyer in a corporation. This type of role enables you to work very closely with your client, be involved in entire transactions and play a role in the success of the corporation. Further, this type of role can work as a springboard to securing a position in management.

Today, most inhouse opportunities are filled by lawyers with at least two years of commercial law experience. Having said this, the unique junior position does come up every so often. In light of this, an inhouse role may be something for you to keep in mind when the opportunity arises.

Roles in government departments (both state and federal) can be fairly similar to inhouse roles, in the sense that a lot of government departments function as business enterprises.

Government roles tend to offer greater flexibility in work hours and less emphasis on timesheets or budgets in comparison to private practice.

If you do not wish to practise, and have more of a bent towards business and marketing, working in human resources or legal recruitment can also be very rewarding.

If you have a marketing or business degree, have had any experience in promotional/marketing activities and have strong communication skills, these will assist you. It does help, however, to have had some quality legal experience.

Finally, you should also be aware that some firms operate very differently from others.

It may be worth looking into other law firms, in particular firms of varying sizes, which can offer very different environments in which to work. In the same vein, you may also wish to consider regional opportunities.

You are in such a lucky position, so take advantage of it.

Career Doctor

Mahlab

Proudly supported by Mahlabb Recruitment