

Thinking of changing careers?

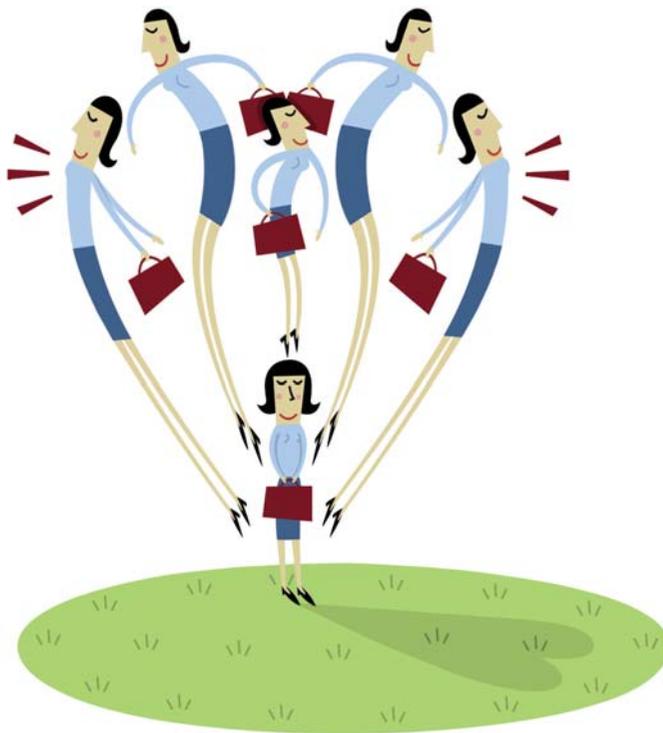
Take heart — there are options. And you don't have to throw your legal training out the window.

By Janice Mucalov

If you've been thinking about quitting the practice of law, you're not alone. Canadian statistics are hard to come by, but in the United States, up to 40 per cent of lawyers want to leave the profession, and an estimated 40,000 lawyers walk away from their jobs each year.

Fortunately, lawyers are well-suited to a surprising number of alternative careers that utilize or draw upon a legal background. Of course, you already know about in-house counsel positions, contract lawyering and legal research jobs. But did you also know you could become a paralegal course instructor, compliance officer, policy analyst or corporate privacy advisor? Or how about a speech writer, immigration consultant or employee benefits manager?

In recent years, a whole mini-industry has sprung up to



assist lawyers seeking non-traditional jobs. Legal career coaches, niche job-posting websites, courses, specialized recruiters and several textbooks are all available to help you find a rewarding alternative career.

Lawyers have successfully found positions in all sorts of related fields.

Here are a few of the most common:

- Administrator
- Arbitrator or mediator
- Auditor
- Business analyst
- Buyer or procurement analyst
- Career counsellor
- Claims adviser
- Compliance officer
- Commercial loan administrator
- Conference developer
- Consumer advocate
- Continuing legal education instructor
- Contracts administrator
- Corporate trainer
- Director of career services at a university or college
- Editor
- Employee benefits manager
- Estate planning specialist
- Ethics officer
- Executive director of a non-profit organization
- Financial aid administrator
- Fundraiser
- Immigration officer or consultant
- Insurance broker
- Investigator
- Labour negotiator
- Law librarian
- Law professor
- LSAT tutor
- Legal correspondent for a newspaper or magazine
- Legal technology consultant
- Lobbyist
- Management consultant
- Marketing or sales representative
- Ombudsperson
- Policy analyst
- Political adviser
- Paralegal instructor
- Privacy law consultant
- Probation officer
- Project manager
- Property developer or manager
- Recruiter
- Seminar leader
- Speaker
- Special events or meeting/conference planner
- Sports agent
- Writer or journalist

• Consider simple changes first

It might be the right move, but first take the time to reflect.

Before firing off any resignation letter, think small. You might not need to actually split from the profession to be happy. A successful change could be as simple as getting more comfortable where you are, advises Monica Parker, a lawyer turned career coach

for lawyers seeking alternative vocations and author of *The Unhappy Lawyer*.

Consider developing more outside interests — this may be enough to add the joy you're missing in your life. If you want more personal and family time, change your relationship with the people you work with, so you can say "no" and set boundaries. Or shift from working with one partner to another if it's a personality issue. If the firm culture is the culprit, switch to another firm.

Possible changes fall along a spectrum, says Parker:

1. Stay put and initiate simple changes
2. Change practice groups or law firms
3. Move into a law-related field
4. Make a total career change outside of law

Consider whether less drastic changes will suffice before embarking on a whole new career as a chef or physiotherapist.

— Janice Mucalov