

ALTERNATIVE CAREERS FOR RECENT LAW SCHOOL GRADS

By Charles A. Volkert III, Esq.

Charles A. Volkert is executive director of [Robert Half Legal](#), a premier legal staffing service specializing in the placement of attorneys, paralegals, legal administrators and other legal professionals with law firms and corporate legal departments. Based in Menlo Park, Calif., Robert Half Legal has offices in major North American and global markets and offers a [full suite of legal staffing and consulting solutions](#).

While the job market is more promising, law school graduates still face challenges finding full-time legal jobs. Many employers are placing a premium on candidates with experience, especially in high-demand specialties like litigation and corporate law. So what can you, as a newly minted JD, do to swing the odds in your favor?

Practicing law is not your only option. Here are some alternate paths to consider beyond the traditional attorney track.

Compliance

An expanding number of regulatory mandates has led to growth in career opportunities in compliance-related legal services. These include taxation, healthcare, anti-money laundering, financial reporting and professional ethics. Legal specialists in these fields are expected to stay abreast of regulatory updates and advise their clients how to respond. As such, compliance professionals must have excellent communication skills, high ethical standards and strong leadership abilities.

The average starting salary for compliance analysts with one to three years' experience is from \$52,750 to \$75,750, a 3.8 percent increase over 2015. If you've been considering a legal career in [compliance](#), now is a good time to make the leap.

Mediation

Many companies and individuals are turning to mediation as a way to limit fees and liability. Also known as arbitrators or conciliators, mediators help two parties resolve conflicts and avoid court. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics' [Occupational Outlook Handbook](#), this field is expected to grow 9 percent from 2014 to 2024.

As with most legal jobs, mediation has many practice areas. Some of the many specialties include divorce, adoption, workplace discrimination, contracts, personal injury, medical malpractice, tax, social security, workers compensation and intellectual property. A background in law, combined with subject matter expertise and a desire to help parties come to a mutual agreement are essential for a legal career in this growing specialty.

Healthcare

Affordable Care Act, has ushered in a host of regulatory, compliance and legal issues for employers, individuals, insurance companies and medical service providers. It's also spawned the need for legal professionals who know the health care law and can explain its ramifications to consumers and businesses.

If you have a background or interest in medicine, healthcare administration, regulatory compliance and emerging medical technology, a legal job in healthcare might be a good fit. Possible employers include governmental agencies, hospitals and clinics, and insurance companies.

eDiscovery

Today's graduates are widely recognized as the most technology-savvy generation to ever enter the job market. So why not put those technical skills to good use? With litigation expected to drive hiring in the first half of 2016, according to a recent Robert Half Legal [survey](#), there is a growing need for legal professionals who are proficient in [eDiscovery](#). In addition, salaries in this growing field are expected to increase by 4.4 to 5.7 percent from last year, according to the [Robert Half Legal 2016 Salary Guide](#).

A niche industry has emerged comprising third-party eDiscovery providers who dedicate their resources to finding better and more efficient ways to sift through and store the ever-growing amount of electronic data for investigations and trials. Some companies opt to contract with these firms. Meanwhile, new technologies such as [predictive coding](#) and analytics software have made it more cost effective for some firms to handle eDiscovery in-house.

There are many legal career options for new JDs who are willing to expand their search, undergo some additional training and [step off the partner track](#). To find one that's right for you, consider your interests, do your due diligence and then take the leap.

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