



Feature

Resolving a Catch-22

By Andrew Tan

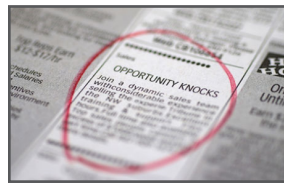
After graduation from law school, the Harvard or Yale graduate will have an easy time finding a job because most of the top firms around the nation will come to him/her. But what of the other law school students? For those students, finding a job can be tough, especially because the reputation of the law school one graduated from carries a lot of weight.



The current job market is a catch-22. On one hand, firms would like to hire candidates who have job experience. However, giving recent graduates without job experience a chance is the one thing that most firms are not willing to do. The solution is planning ahead by finding jobs, internships

, or externships at law firms or corporate legal departments. This can be done during law school or summer breaks, and law firms are always more than happy to obtain volunteers. Judicial clerkships are also instrumental in providing the legal experience needed to get a job after law school because much of the work will be trial-related and the positions are highly competitive.

Alternatives to obtaining internships, externships, or judicial clerkships can be participation in moot court, legal clinics, or law review. Awards for the highest grade in the class or competitions are also beneficial. In each case, it demonstrates to a potential employer that the candidate is a capable individual who strives to provide the best work product. Nevertheless, these alternatives are not as impressive as a combination of work experience and law school activities.



So what type of experience is good? Almost any experience, short of being relegated to secretarial work, is good experience. Even if one were merely researching and writing motions and memoranda all

day, the experience is helpful because it is still a part of law practice. Most law firms will not expect recent graduates to have conducted trials. However, internships with district attorney's offices, public defenders, or law school legal clinics may provide opportunities for law school students to demonstrate their oral-advocacy skills in trials.

In the end, how much experience is enough to get a job will depend on what the firm is looking for and how well one can market him/herself in a resume and cover letter and in an interview. But some experience is better than no experience at all, because one still must compete with one's peers after graduation; and in that battle, the more experience one has, the better off one is.

EmploymentCrossing is the largest collection of active jobs in the world.

We continuously monitor the hiring needs of more than 250,000 employers, including virtually every corporation and organization in the United States. We do not charge employers to post their jobs and we aggressively contact and investigate thousands of employers each day to learn of new positions. No one works harder than EmploymentCrossing.

Let EmploymentCrossing go to work for you.