Robert Half Canada

25 Tips For Prospective Law School Students From Practicing Lawyers

TORONTO, May 3, 2018 /CNW/ - Undergraduate students considering law school should learn as much as they can about the ins and outs of a legal career before making the leap, a recent Robert Half Legal survey of 350 Canadian and U.S. - based lawyers suggests. While the majority of lawyers provided education and career-focused guidance, nine per cent of respondents advised against pursuing a Juris Doctor degree. Following are 25 of the various tips lawyers offered to help undergrads determine if law school is the right path:

Lawyers were asked, "**What advice would you offer a student who is contemplating law school?** Among their responses:

1. "Take time and interview people in the profession before making a decision."
2. "Shadow an attorney first."
3. "Take a year off between college and law school to work at a law firm before embarking on school."
4. "Have a clear idea of what you intend to do with the degree."
5. "Map out the first 10 years of the career. Work back 10 years out from law school and figure out what value law school provides in terms of access to roles, skills and return on investment."
6. "Go to law school in a geographic area you would like to practice in."
7. "Be open to different applications of the degree."
8. "Don't do it for the money."
9. "Consider how long it will take to pay back your student loans."

Lawyers also emphasized the importance of developing key skills and experience during law school to prepare for a legal career:

10. "Learn to think critically."
11. "Try to concentrate on courses that relate to business, because part of the challenge in the practice of law is how to run a business."
12. "Don't get involved if you don't enjoy reading."
13. "Get a more scientific, technical background as opposed to a general arts background."
14. "Keep your options wide open, don't focus on one area of law."
15. "Be prepared for a marathon and take advantage of internships."
16. "Focus on a writing course so you stand out more when you become a lawyer."
17. "Get involved in the community, help people and network."

"Law school requires significant dedication and resources, but the rewards of an legal career can be numerous, including the ability to conduct challenging work, effect change and earn above average compensation," said Jamy Sullivan, executive director of Robert Half Legal. "To help determine whether law school will be a good fit, prospective students should thoroughly research programs and job opportunities in practice areas that interest them."

Sullivan added, "Shadowing legal professionals for the day also can help potential law school applicants better understand workplace demands and the skills needed for success."

Lawyers offered the following guidance to help students maximize their educational experience and prepare for a future legal career:

18. "Be realistic in your expectations."
19. "Treat law school like a job; spend the hours you would spend at work."
20. "Find your passion, because you have to enjoy what you are doing."
21. "Grades are important, but so is life balance. It is important to have a balance beyond legal skills."
22. "It's a good education. You can use it for a lot of different things even if you are not a lawyer."
23. "Be ready to work long hours, study hard, never give up and stay at the top of the class."
24. "Pick an area of law that you love working in."
25. "Don't give up, even when there seems to be no end in sight, when it gets to be too overwhelming."

Finally, several lawyers stressed the importance of being patient and keeping an open mind — essential advice both for law students and practitioners.

About the Survey

The survey was developed by Robert Half Legal and conducted by an independent research firm. It is based on 350 telephone interviews of lawyers with law firms and companies in Canada and the United States.

About Robert Half Legal

Robert Half Legal is the premier provider of legal staffing and consulting solutions for law firms and corporate legal departments. With North American and global locations, Robert Half Legal provides a customized approach, including managed review, legal project management and eDiscovery services, to help organizations handle constantly changing workloads. The company offers in-demand expertise across practice areas, as well as highly skilled legal professionals on a temporary, project and full-time basis. More information about our full suite of legal staffing and consulting solutions can be found at roberthalf.ca/legal.

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