**Taking Control - How to Search for Satisfying Positions**

The following is, in part, adapted from " [Lawful Pursuit](http://www.abanet.org/lsd/pubs/5270039.html)" by [Ronald W. Fox, Esquire](http://www.ronaldwfox.com/ronfoxhtm.html), published by the American Bar Association

**The Search**  Now you know what setting you want to be in, the field within that setting and the description of the duties and responsibilities of a position consistent with your personal and professional goals. Remember - only a small percentage of openings are advertised in writing so don't spend much time responding to ads. In fact, a high percentage of professionals persuade employers to create positions which take advantage of their unique experience and talents. Many others start organizations and become their own bosses.

**Packaging Yourself**  NOW and only now can you prepare the material you need to describe yourself - after you have gone through the process of exploring your goals, skills and options and have decided what you are going to do. You can't promote yourself if you don't know who you are and what you are seeking. We refer to "material" because you may not need a resume in the beginning. In fact, if you choose not to be an employee, you may need a brochure or a proposal. In any event only now can you present yourself as someone with the desired qualifications, commitment, and potential.

**Who Practices In Your Chosen Field**  Now you have to develop a list of potential workplaces. Many resources you have always known become useful tools once you know where you are heading. If you want to practice with a small firm in the area of family law or tax law in a medium size firm or work as a lawyer for a software developing company or as an advocate for a non-profit involved in workplace safety - find out about alumni/ae from your law school who do that, talk to staff at a bar association, explore the Legal Subject Index on FindLaw, do research on-line on West Law Directory and Martindale-Hubbell, talk to court officers, use on-line industry and non-profit directories. Continue to enlist the help of friends, family, and other lawyers.

**Promoting Yourself**  You have compiled a list of many individuals and organizations, and numerous places where you might like to work..(H)owever, you do not know of any openings. What you have to do next has been described in many ways including "networking" and "self-advocacy" or "promotion." Highlight the names of those people you spoke to during informational interviewing, and others likely to be "warm" contacts. Call, make it clear that you are not asking for a job and attempt to set up a "promotional interview". Remember that the objective is to make the interviewer aware of your background, commitment to the area and availability so that if he or she hears about an opening elsewhere, your name and resume will be passed on.

**Get Involved**  As soon as you have decided what you want to do, take your choice seriously - get involved with those doing it. You need not wait until you are employed or earning money in that field. Take courses, work or volunteer on a part time basis, and join a professional organization. You will not only make contact with others but also have the opportunity to grow as a professional in that field.

**Selling Yourself**  You have an appointment to talk about the opening. Remember that since you were looking for positions not publicly advertised, you may be the only person under consideration. Your primary competition is yourself. From your perspective you should know the skills and experience needed and show you have them. From their perspective the interview is a time to get a sense of your commitment, your experience, your potential and your personality.

**Making A Decision**  If you are offered a position, the question is "Do I want it?" Evaluate the extent to which it is consistent with your goals, values, and skills and have the strength to reject it if there is a clear and strong conflict. Congratulate yourself if you accept it. You are on the road to career satisfaction.

**Reassessment and the Career**  Your first position may not be perfect, but because you chose it based on what you thought was good for you, it is much more likely that you derived some benefit from it. The next one will be easier to find because of what you have learned about yourself. What you do and where you end up are to a great extent up to you.

**Choose A Satisfying Career Serving the Legal Needs of the Public**  If you went to law school seeking to work for social and political goals, to help people and groups with whom you sympathize, or simply to do "something that matters", do not let yourself be "placed" somewhere else. Your professional degree provides you with a unique opportunity and a privilege few have - the possibility of autonomy, satisfaction, dignity, integrity, self-respect and, most meaningful of all, the prospect of sleeping well after a long day on the job and waking up looking forward to going to work.

**And All You Have To Do Is Take Control**