

THE BRIDGE

*How to Launch Your Career
through a Legal Internship*

LexisNexis Law School Publishing Advisory Board

Paul Caron

Professor of Law

Pepperdine University School of Law

Bridgette Carr

Clinical Professor of Law

University of Michigan Law School

Steven I. Friedland

Professor of Law and Senior Scholar

Elon University School of Law

Carole Goldberg

Jonathan D. Varat Distinguished Professor of Law

UCLA School of Law

Oliver Goodenough

Professor of Law

Vermont Law School

John Sprankling

Distinguished Professor of Law

McGeorge School of Law

THE BRIDGE

How to Launch Your Career through a Legal Internship

Maxwell D. Rosenthal, Esq.

Print ISBN: 978-1-6328-1810-2

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Rosenthal, Maxwell D., author.

The bridge: how to launch your career through a legal internship / Maxwell D. Rosenthal, Esq.

pages cm

Includes index.

ISBN 978-1-63281-810-2 (softbound)

1. Law--Study and teaching (internship)--United States. 2. Law--Vocational guidance--United States. I. Title

KF282.7.R67. 2015

340.071'55--dc23

2015032572

This publication is designed to provide authoritative information in regard to the subject matter covered. It is sold with the understanding that the publisher is not engaged in rendering legal, accounting, or other professional services. If legal advice or other expert assistance is required, the services of a competent professional should be sought.

LexisNexis and the Knowledge Burst logo are registered trademarks of Reed Elsevier Properties Inc., used under license. Matthew Bender and the Matthew Bender Flame Design are registered trademarks of Matthew Bender Properties Inc.

Copyright © 2015 Matthew Bender & Company, Inc., a member of LexisNexis. All Rights Reserved.

No copyright is claimed by LexisNexis or Matthew Bender & Company, Inc., in the text of statutes, regulations, and excerpts from court opinions quoted within this work. Permission to copy material may be licensed for a fee from the Copyright Clearance Center, 222 Rosewood Drive, Danvers, Mass. 01923, telephone (978) 750-8400.

Editorial Offices

630 Central Ave., New Providence, NJ 07974 (908) 464-6800

201 Mission St., San Francisco, CA 94105-1831 (415) 908-3200

www.lexisnexis.com

MATTHEW  BENDER

Dedication

*To our son, Nathan.
May you find purpose and happiness and your life's work.*

Acknowledgments

A wise man once told me: “Success is achieved by working hard and surrounding yourself with people who are smarter than you.” I truly have taken this advice to heart. While writing this book was essentially a solitary endeavor, I was supported in myriad ways by a community of intelligent, experienced, dynamic, generous, enthusiastic, and insightful individuals. For their help, I am eternally grateful.

First and foremost, I must thank my beautiful and brilliant wife, Rosanna. You are the centerpiece of my world — a wonderful mother to our son, Nathan, my best friend, toughest critic, and biggest advocate. You make me a better father, husband and professional and fill my life with passion, purpose, and laughter. I deeply appreciate all of the sacrifices you made so I could write this book.

Next I would like to thank my family. I was blessed to be raised by loving parents who encouraged me and my siblings to support and appreciate one another, and to be unafraid to try new things. Without this warm upbringing, I would not have had the confidence to attempt to write my first book. I owe a special thanks to my older brothers, Joshua and Michael, who, on one lazy Sunday afternoon three years ago, enthusiastically engaged in the brainstorming session that inspired this book.

Very early on in this journey, Ari Kaplan and Julie Schechter gave me advice that helped me transform my raw ideas into a book and avoid many obstacles along the way. Thank you for your time, encouragement, and charity. Without you both I’m not sure how far this would have gone.

At different junctures while writing this book, I sought input from a “panel” of legal professionals working at law firms, in-house legal departments, government agencies, and law schools who all selflessly reviewed and gave feedback on the content of *The Bridge*. For their contributions, I would like to recognize, in no particular order: Adam Turbowitz, Esq., Justin Steinfeld, Esq., Benjamin Wilson, Esq., Greg Skiff, Esq., Heather England, Esq., Matthew Monteith, Esq., Nathaniel Christian III, Esq., Maura Kelly, David Rossi, Esq., Coleen Chin, Esq., Marc Antonecchia, Esq., Anne Gibbs, Linda Morton, Esq., John Erbes, Esq., Andrew Krinsky, Esq., Jeremy Paul, Esq. and Luke Bierman, Esq. Your insights ensured that *The Bridge* would benefit all law students and, on a personal note, reaffirmed my confidence in the collective good nature of our legal community. Thank you for taking time out of your packed schedules to add value to this endeavor.

Many thanks to the team at Lexis Nexis, Keith Moore, Kimberly Brennan, and Teri Smith, for their excitement for *The Bridge* and collaboration throughout the process.

Last, I’d like to thank all of my colleagues at Tarter Krinsky & Drogin LLP, especially Alan Tarter, Esq. Andrew Krinsky, Esq. and Laurent Drogin, Esq. (the “wise man” quoted above) for teaching me by example how to be an honorable attorney and professional, providing me with the platform to run TKD’s legal internship program, imparting your wisdom and guidance on me, and consistently supporting my career.

Table of Contents

PART I	DETERMINING YOUR CAREER PATH	1
Ch. 1	YOUR CAREER CONSIDERATIONS	3
Ch. 2	YOUR OPTIONS IN THE LEGAL PROFESSION	13
PART II	GETTING YOUR INTERNSHIP	29
Ch. 3	FINDING INTERNSHIP OPPORTUNITIES	31
Ch. 4	APPLYING FOR INTERNSHIPS	47
Ch. 5	THE INTERVIEW	65
PART III	THE THREE GOALS FOR YOUR LEGAL INTERNSHIP ..	73
Ch. 6	LEARN PRACTICAL LEGAL SKILLS	77
Ch. 7	CREATE WORKING RELATIONSHIPS WITH ATTORNEYS	87
Ch. 8	DEVELOP AS A PROFESSIONAL	93
PART IV	PERFORMANCE DURING YOUR INTERNSHIP	101
Ch. 9	PREPARE FOR YOUR INTERNSHIP	103
Ch. 10	BE ENTHUSIASTIC	109
Ch. 11	DEMONSTRATE A STRONG ATTENTION TO DETAIL	115
Ch. 12	MANAGE YOUR STRESS	121
Ch. 13	UPWARDLY MANAGE YOUR ASSIGNING ATTORNEYS	127
Ch. 14	NAIL THE LEGAL RESEARCH ASSIGNMENT	135
Ch. 15	TWENTY TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL PERFORMANCE	151
Ch. 16	WINDING DOWN PROFESSIONALLY	163

Foreword

By Cliff Ennico

There have been many changes in the U.S. legal profession in the 35 years since I graduated law school. I am happy to have instigated some of them.

But one thing — a BIG thing — has not changed. Talk to any legal recruiter, or law school placement person, and they will all tell you the same thing: “it has never been harder to land a legal job, especially for recent law school graduates.”

It is no secret that law school, like medical school, doesn’t teach you any practical skills. As it was 35 years ago, you spend most of your time reading cases and (maybe) do some moot court stuff. If you’re lucky, you have participated in some sort of legal clinic. If you’re even luckier, you have written for your law school’s Law Review or other more specialized legal journal. But if someone asks you to draft a will, form a corporation or limited liability company, or help them buy a new house . . . you’re clueless.

Like young doctors, young lawyers traditionally have served an “apprenticeship” period following law school. They would work as an “associate” (read, employee) for a law firm, “learning the ropes” and immerse themselves 100% in legal work under the tutelage of more senior lawyers in the firm until they can stand on their own feet and handle cases, business transactions, and other legal work without supervision. Our profession has never called it “internship and residency,” but they might just as well do so. It was never easy to land these “associate” positions, even 35 years ago, but today it is nearly impossible.

But here’s one thing that has changed in the last 35 years: back then there were no “internship” positions as such. By “internship” I mean something akin to a “work study” program in other professions, where you can get your degree and work X hours a week at a (mostly unpaid) job in the hopes that a job offer will be extended to you upon graduation.

The biggest development in legal career management since the 1980s is the proliferation of “internship” positions — both paid and unpaid — at law firms, corporations, and other legal employers. The minute you start attending law school, you have to begin thinking about how you will get a job upon graduation. Waiting until the summer after second year may well be too late – the good positions may well have been taken. Landing the right “internship” during your law school years, and possibly immediately afterwards, may well make the difference between a successful legal career and working as a barista at Starbuck’s.

In the 35 years since I graduated law school, there has not been a single book published in the United States to help young lawyers find and deal with internships. Now there is one. In this book Max teaches you the “real world” of legal internships, and gives you the “inside baseball” you will need to survive and enter the “holy of holies” of our profession — the right full-time position upon graduation.

You should thank your lucky stars that my good friend Max Rosenthal has written this book. He didn’t have to, after all. He could have kept all he learned to himself, left you to figure out how this world works, and joined the legions of lawyers (you will meet many) who feel that mentoring the next generation isn’t important.

Instead, he took the time and effort out of his 90-hour-plus workweeks to write a

Foreword

wonderful book about how to get, and survive, a legal internship. Because he cares about you. He really does. And amazingly, despite all hard evidence to the contrary, he remains stubbornly optimistic about the future of the U.S. legal profession, and your future in it.

He reminds me of another young lawyer I knew once.

CLIFF ENNICO

(www.legalcareer.com),

author of “The Legal Job Interview: Winning the Law-Related Job in Today’s Market”, “Business Lawyer’s Handbook: What Business Lawyers Do”, “Partner Track: How to Go from Associate to Partner in Any Law Firm”, and the forthcoming “Bathrobe Lawyer: How to Build a World-Class Solo Law Practice from Your Home Office.”

Introduction

Whether or not you realize it, beginning on the first day of law school, chances are that you committed yourself to becoming an attorney. You have only three years to figure out what kind of attorney you want to be and best position yourself to become it. Use this time wisely.

Take comfort in knowing that you made a great decision to attend law school. Upon graduation, you will join a community of professionals working at the center and highest ranks of business and government. You can choose to work for many types of organizations, including law firms, in-house legal departments, government agencies, the legislature, public advocacy groups and the judiciary. You will have the honor and responsibility to advocate on behalf of others, counsel on matters of importance, seek justice, reach resolution and impact change. Indeed, practicing law can be prestigious, exciting, dynamic, fulfilling, lucrative and fun.

But many challenges also lay ahead for you. For one, regardless of whether you have signed checks or promissory notes, law school is an enormous financial commitment, the impact of which will not be felt until after graduation. And once you do graduate and are fortunate enough to land that first job, you will likely be working long hours. This means that the quality of your life after graduation will depend heavily on whether you enjoy your work. Make no mistake, the time to start building your career has already begun.

Don't waste another minute looking back and questioning your decision. Rid yourself of all hesitancy, tentativeness and doubt and fully commit to this endeavor. Start thinking strategically about what you must do to set yourself apart from your peers, further your professional maturation and enhance your marketability upon graduation. If you do this, there will be a profoundly rewarding career available to you – but nobody is going to hand it to you. You must reach out and seize it.

The Bridge is about empowerment. It's a blueprint for obtaining the legal internship that is best for you and using that experience to take control of your career. My hope is that reading this book will provide the clarity, confidence, motivation and direction to bring you closer to achieving success, whatever that means for you.

CONTENT DEVELOPMENT FOR *THE BRIDGE*

My internships during law school were profoundly positive and transformative experiences for me. I grew immensely through the challenges presented, learned a great deal about what I wanted (and did not want) in my legal career and developed relationships with attorneys who now are some of my most esteemed colleagues. I credit much of my professional successes to the strides taken and seeds planted during my legal internships.

While it didn't happen straight out of law school, I eventually returned to the organization where I spent my final internship. Along with practicing law, I also designed and now direct my firm's legal internship program. I spearhead the recruitment, interviewing, hiring, supervision, training, mentoring and evaluating of law students who work at our firm year round. I draft and post our job openings, review resumes and cover letters, coordinate and conduct interviews, make hiring decisions, work closely with our interns, give mid-way and

Introduction

final performance reviews, and participate in high-level discussions about whether to hire them as attorneys.

Through this process, I have learned the common intern mistakes, challenges, misperceptions, and observed and helped them overcome obstacles to achieve success. I've paid close attention to how interns interact with other attorneys and support staff, watched them struggle and improve, and stayed in touch with them after they graduate, search for attorney positions, enter the workforce, and become my professional colleagues.

Working with law students has become an integral part of my daily life and a source of great satisfaction in my career. My own internship experiences, along with my work as head of my firm's internship program, served as the motivation for authoring *The Bridge* and the foundation for its content.

The Bridge is rooted in extensive research and incorporates principles from various disciplines including human resources consulting, recruitment and relationship-building, professional development, leadership training, experiential learning, behavioral, cognitive and organizational psychology, and law practice management. These principles are applied to real situations that arise during internships to provide color, context, foreshadow what to expect and to resonate with the reader.

The lessons of *The Bridge* were then refined with the input of law school career development administrators, practice management professionals, and practicing attorneys with decades of work experience. To ensure that *The Bridge* addresses internships in all sectors of the legal industry, a panel of practitioners from small and large law firms, federal and state government agencies, non-profit organizations and in-house legal departments was enlisted to review, edit, and approve the material.

The Bridge covers every angle, is endorsed by legal professionals of all experience levels and sectors and, perhaps most importantly, addresses the issues that apply to legal interns today. It is relevant, comprehensive, and practical. The guidance set forth in *The Bridge* is designed to optimize any internship experience.

READING CONSIDERATIONS

A couple points to keep in mind as you read. First, the word “internship” is a blanket term used throughout this book that refers to any practical legal experience, paid or unpaid. Irrespective of whether it is a formal program facilitated by a school or a part-time job found on Craigslist – the lessons in *The Bridge* apply to any arrangement where a law student is working in a real world setting. In that regard, “internship” encompasses whatever term is used by your school for these arrangements, such as externship, fellowship, clinic, practicum, cooperative, clerkship or summer associate.

Second, *The Bridge* is written primarily for the vast majority of law students who plan to practice law after graduation in some capacity. Careers outside the practice of law are too varied to be taken into account in this book and if you plan to be a non-practicing lawyer, there may be certain principles that don't apply. Overall, however, *The Bridge* will benefit any law student who is about to embark on an internship, regardless of their post-graduate aspirations.

Third, the instructions in *The Bridge* are not a precise recipe. You do not have to do

Introduction

everything exactly as directed in order to succeed. Rather, this is a comprehensive exploration and illustration into *what you should do* to achieve success in obtaining and performing during a legal internship. As you read, don't become overwhelmed if you feel like you can't do everything that is recommended. But know that the more you do, the greater your chances will be for success.

STRUCTURE OF *THE BRIDGE*

The Bridge has a natural order to it and, if appropriate, should be read in its entirety from the beginning. Part I opens with a two-tiered inquiry that should be conducted by every law student as early in their career as possible. Chapter 1 is an internal exploration of what a law student should be considering about themselves when determining their career path. Chapter 2 then turns the student's inquiry outward to a comprehensive overview of the various job options within the legal profession. Part I is a pre-requisite for making large decisions about your legal career, one of which is selecting where to work as an intern.

Part II walks through the three, equally-important stages of obtaining your legal internship – finding, applying and interviewing. Chapter 3 demonstrates how to strategically-focus your search to find the greatest number of attainable job opportunities, your ideal position and/or an internship that puts you in the best position to get hired for your ideal position in the future. Chapter 4 explains how to draft and seamlessly weave together a narrowly-tailored resume with an eloquent and endearing cover letter. Chapter 5 prepares you for delivering a great performance during your interview to seal the deal and get the job offer.

Part III sets the three goals for your legal internship. Chapter 6 travels the stages of the Experiential Learning Cycle and instructs on how you can acquire the most practical legal skills. Chapter 7 explains how and why you should strive to create working relationships with attorneys during your internship. Chapter 8 defines professional development and identifies the various experiences during your internship when it is most likely to happen.

Part IV is a game plan for successful performance. Chapter 9 shows you how to prepare to meet the specific challenges that you will face during the internship. Chapter 10 encourages you to always be enthusiastic and how intrinsic motivation can help you overcome adversity. Chapter 11 highlights the importance of demonstrating a strong attention to detail and provides tips to avoid making mistakes. Chapter 12 explores the difficult situations that may arise and provides techniques for managing your stress. Chapter 13 introduces the concept of upwardly managing your supervising attorneys and applies its principles to the internship/assigning attorney relationship. Chapter 14 provides a step-by-step process through which you should nail your research assignments. Chapter 15 lists twenty of the most impactful tips for successful performance during an internship. Chapter 16 walks through the final tasks of ending your internship right.

