4 Reasons to Consider Teaching Law in a Business School

Career Development

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ACC has a wonderful Career Development Section that includes many useful articles on each stage of an in-house attorney's career. In one of the articles, retired general counsel Rich Cohen addresses a number of questions that should be considered throughout anyone's career, not only in-house counsel and not only at halftime. This is how he opens the article:

"Time has a tendency to slip by and then you wonder: Where has the time gone and what have you accomplished professionally? What do you want to do the rest of your career and are you a satisfied and fulfilled professional?

These are common questions as you enter into the midpoint of your career. Like an American football game's halftime, in-house counsel need to make the necessary adjustments to make sure they're successful by the end of their careers. But all too often, our definition of "winning" changes between the first and second halves of your career.

It's important for in-house counsel to take the time and examine their current career paths and where they want to grow in the future: Is success about prestige and finding fortune? Or is it more about balance between personal and professional lives?

At this stage of your in-house career, you must be willing to assess yourself and your talents in an honest fashion in order to make careful, knowledgeable, and hopefully, positive changes. You control the outcome through careful introspection, planning, and discipline — you can change your career path."

Take the time to analyze your current career and decide if an alternate in-house career path is better suited for yourself and your future. eamesBot / *Shutterstock.com*

A new alternative is available for those considering their next step: teaching law in a business school. Traditionally, business schools offered two business law teaching options: (1) full-time positions that include full teaching, research, and service responsibilities and (2) part-time positions that include only teaching duties. But increasingly, they are offering a third option, a full-time position that focuses on teaching. For example, 11 of the 28 full-time business law positions at Indiana University are held by teaching faculty.

The experience and expertise in-house counsel possess would make teaching law in a business school a great alternative career. Vectorbum / *Shutterstock.com*

In a recent article in the *American Bar Association Journal*, I discuss how law in a business school differs from law school teaching, with examples from courses taught by Wharton's Professor Richard Shell. These differences illustrate why attorneys with in-house experience are ideal candidates for a business law position. For instance:

1. Business law professors, like many in-house lawyers, tend to be generalists when teaching required courses. A required course at Indiana University, for example, covers torts, contracts, and government regulation. But there is also an opportunity to teach electives in specialized areas of the law.
2. Business law teaching is less theoretical and more applied than law school teaching. As a result, full-time teaching positions might require the type of experience that in-house counsel possess.
3. Business law professors interact with colleagues from a variety of disciplines that are similar to the business functions that in-house counsel work with.
4. Just as in-house counsel have the opportunity to cross over to leadership positions beyond the law function, many business law professors serve in leadership positions on campus.

If you are interested in a business law position, a starting point is membership in the Academy of Legal Studies in Business, which maintains a list of job postings. A side benefit is the ability to obtain CLE credit at the annual ALSB meeting. Additional benefits are described in the ABAJ article.

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George Siedel completed graduate studies at the University of Michigan and Cambridge University. Following graduation, he worked as an attorney in a professional corporation before joining the faculty at the University of Michigan. Professor Siedel has been admitted to practice before the United States Supreme Court and in several states. He has served on several boards of directors and as Associate Dean at the University of Michigan’s Ross School of Business, where he headed the Executive Education Center.

Professor Siedel was a Visiting Professor at Stanford University and Harvard University, a Visiting Scholar at Berkeley, and a Parsons Fellow at the University of Sydney. He has been elected a Visiting Fellow at Cambridge University's Wolfson College and a Life Fellow of the Michigan State Bar Foundation. As a Fulbright Scholar in Eastern Europe, he held a Distinguished Chair in the Humanities and Social Sciences.

The author of numerous books and articles, Professor Siedel received the Faculty Recognition Award from the University of Michigan and several national research awards, including the Hoeber Award, the Ralph Bunche Award and the Maurer Award. In 2018, he received the Distinguished Career Achievement Award from the Academy of Legal Studies in Business.

Professor Siedel has received several teaching awards, including the 2018 Executive Program Professor of the Year Award from a consortium of thirty-six leading universities committed to international education.