

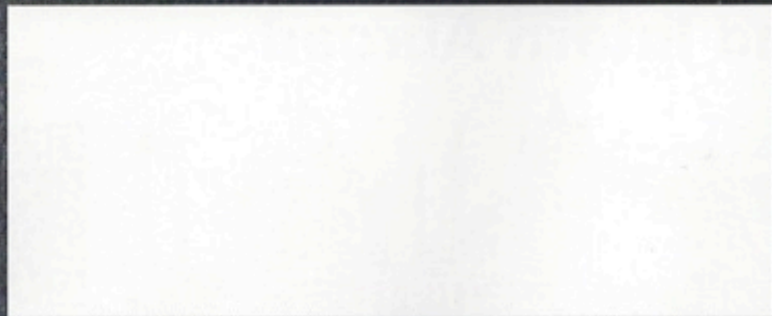
STUDENT LAWYER

ABA
JANUARY 2015
VOL. 43 NO. 5

LAW STUDENT DIVISION • AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION



International Intrigue: Career opportunities abroad



2015 STUDY ABROAD DIRECTORY
Lessons Beyond the Classroom

P. 26

Conquer Your Fear of Networking

P. 53



Honing Your Business Focus Early Pays Off



During my time in law school, I wish I had focused less on studying and more on building my career. It may sound like I am putting the proverbial cart before the horse, given the fact that—obviously—a law student needs good grades to land the summer job that leads to the firm job, if that is the chosen career path. However, as a solo practitioner who has become a proficient networker—as everyone in business must be—I know now that during my time in law school, career building would not have been premature, and I think this guidance is most important for current students to understand.

As an attorney practicing in the unique field of entertainment, I enjoy speaking at events including bar association gatherings, entertainment panels, and film festivals. When law students approach me seeking advice, I respond by telling them to start their careers now. While it is true that they cannot yet hold themselves out as attorneys, there are ways to begin a career in their desired area. Some of the most successful companies—including Google, Facebook, Yahoo, Microsoft, and Dell—have been started by college students. Law students, particularly ones who do not feel inclined to go the firm route, should hone their business focus. While it is true that money is often tight for students, there are economical ways to advance. For example, for the low cost of incorporating and printing business cards, a prospective music lawyer could start a small music management company and talk to local bands; another option is to be a music manager in training. Both of these paths would provide several years' worth of experience in the entertainment industry, and would help to build a client base and a résumé, which would set a student apart after graduation.

I saw this advice put into practice by someone I know, which made me

wish I had followed it myself. During his own time in law school, this aspiring entertainment lawyer would meet with up-and-coming actors and offer advice on how they could best manage their careers. He was able to build such successful relationships that these actors became eager for him to graduate so he could provide legal counsel. During his own job hunt, he told prospective employers about his self-made, real-world experience as well as the client base he developed and could bring to the job. This made him a very attractive candidate with proven new business skills, which helped to set him apart from students with better grades or degrees from more prestigious law schools.

Thinking about how to build your career now enables you to establish control of where your education can take you, regardless of your location or legal area of interest. This out-of-the-box thinking will require a shift in focus from schoolwork, and that is not always easy to accomplish. But chances are that it will be time well spent. Training yourself to be opportunity-focused will broaden your business-building skills, which will pay off in the long run—whether you are a solo practitioner or a firm lawyer.



ETHAN BORDMAN is an entertainment attorney and film finance consultant who represents Emmy-winning producers and directors, and Tony- and Drama Desk- nominated actors, screenwriters, and authors. In addition to a law degree and an MBA, he holds an LL.M. in entertainment law from the University of Westminster in London, England, and an LL.M. in international sports law from Anglia University in Cambridge, England. Bordman has been named a *New York Super Lawyer Rising Star* in entertainment and sports law.