

## New economy jobs for 'older' lawyers

Margaret Beaton 17 April 2012

Much of my time as an executive coach is spent working with clients in the second half of their careers as solicitors.

These law firm partners love the law. They love working with clients. They have vast experience. They're clever too. And usually they have endless energy. But they're looking beyond what they currently do. And asking what's next for me? Their questions deal with the transitions they want and need to make.

Here's another way of looking at possible answers to their questions. By combining their love and knowledge of the law with new economy thinking there is a raft of opportunities available. First came Englishman Richard Susskind's thinking expressed in his book *The End of Lawyers?* Professor Susskind was probably ahead of its time in Australia and many other jurisdictions and wasn't really noticed by the main stream.

Now Jordan Furlong, a Canadian, has built on Susskind's ideas and just penned a very accessible post on the *future of legal employment*. Although Jordan is writing about young lawyers and law students and the many interesting opportunities they now have outside conventional law firms, as I reflect on his post I think about many of my clients—those I have described above. You need to read the whole post but, in short, here are the jobs in his own words...

- + General Contractor, assembling the best team of legal professionals to achieve specific goals or solve one-off problems
- + Knowledge Tailor, creating customized banks of legal know-how uniquely designed for specific clients
- + Strategic Auditor, analyzing organizations for legal risk, strategy disconnects, function variances and productivity leakages
- + Accreditation Monitor, reviewing other lawyers' continued fitness to hold a law licence on behalf of regulators
- + Proficiency Analyst, periodically assessing an organization's legal advisors for competence and client awareness
- + Legal Physician, providing individual clients with annual low-cost checkups of their family's legal health
- + Informal Arbitrator, delivering fast, brief, non-binding "judgments" of disputes to facilitate settlements.

As Jordan explains each of these jobs uses an experienced conventional solicitor's strengths and applies them in ways that *involve multiple clients, require the application of high-end skills, involve a high degree of customization, meet a need unfilled by a traditional provider, focus far more on preventing problems than on solving them, presume a high degree of connectedness, and deliver specific, identifiable, and actionable value to the buyer* (my italics acknowledge the author's phrases and ideas).

Stop and think about the possibilities. It's never too late. And very exciting, especially if you are 'older'.

*This post was written by Dr Margaret Beaton, a director of [Beaton Executive Coaching](#) and [Beaton Research + Consulting](#). You can also find Margaret on [LinkedIn](#).*