

New Year's Tips for Recent Graduates: Set SMART Job Search Goals

by Ramona J. Sein

At this time of year, unemployed recent graduates are having to come to grips with the fact that their post-graduate permanent job search is a marathon, not a sprint. After 7+ months of looking for employment, many newly minted JDs risk becoming frustrated to the point of paralysis. Even when recent graduates have focused their job search and defined a goal as concrete as “working as a litigation associate in a small firm in New York City,” the process and path to achieving that goal can seem overwhelming and prevent graduates from doing anything after months of searching unsuccessfully. Understandably, they’re ready to quit the race and throw in the towel. How do we as ca-

in the *side* job market, I will set up two networking coffee breaks with litigators at small firms to gain their insights and advice about the legal market, potential job leads at their firm or other employers, and referrals to other employers for networking or job application purposes. To obtain employment in the *side* job market, I will set up weekly automatic job search alerts in Symplicity (and other online job posting forums) for job openings that meet my target employment criteria (New York City litigation positions for which a JD and a JD with bar license are required). Before applying, I will research each new opportunity and try to speak with someone who has worked for the employer to learn more about the position. I will incorporate the knowledge that I gain into my application materials.

- I will subscribe to daily email news alerts from the *New York Business Journal* to keep abreast of business and community developments. Note: there are *Business Journal* for several major cities across the country (www.bizjournals.com), and many news and industry media outlets offer free digital daily emails summarizing the top news stories in their markets.

- I will join relevant bar and professional associations such as the New York City Bar and the New York State Bar Association (including its Trial Lawyers Section). Each month, I will attend two bar events and offer to help edit the Trial Lawyers Section Digest to gain experience working with their members.

By developing SMART goals for the marathon job search, recent graduates can focus on manageable job search activities, land their first position, and develop effective work habits that will serve them well in their careers.

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