LAW STUDENT SURVEY

THE MINDSET OF THE MILLENNIAL LAW STUDENT

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The Mindset of the Millennial Law Student

To attract the next generation of legal talent, firms need to understand today's students.

Every law firm aims to attract the best legal talent, whether a firm is looking to bring on board a senior rainmaker, or fill an articling position. Firms invest considerable effort and expense in training programs in the hopes that inexperienced hires will become capable junior associates and, eventually, reliable client developers.

As such, law firms looking to do more than fit a body to a desk will be interested in the results of our law student survey. We polled over 230 students studying law in universities all across Canada. The resulting report is both a snapshot of the preferences and thinking of current students and a look ahead to the future of the profession; after all, today's students will become tomorrow's managing partners.

The Law Student Survey

To give firms a comprehensive understanding of today's law students, we surveyed students across the country from Vancouver Island to Halifax. In total, 234 students representing 20 different Canadian law schools shared their methods for researching articling opportunities, their professional aspirations, and their perspectives on what qualities matter most in a law firm.

This survey represents an overview of the mindset of law students in Canada. To provide further insight, we conducted in-depth interviews with three Canadian law students, which can be found in the attachment to this report.

The Results are In

What do today's law students look for in a firm? How are they conducting their research into potential employers? What are their career aspirations and how prepared do they feel to achieve these goals? This study reveals a generation of future lawyers who are digitally-savvy, eager for mentorship in an uncertain landscape, and hoping for a life outside of the office.

Some key takeaways include:

- Websites are an important source of information about a firm and students turn to firm sites to assess fit;

- Often student information doesn't stand out from one firm to the next. Where possible, make your student content original and engaging;

- Websites can affect student perception of firm quality;

- Law students are not influenced by a law firm's social media and most don't research it;

- Law students feel that their education has not prepared them for the business-side of law;

- They are eager for mentorship opportunities and see the value in formal training programs;

- Today's law students are looking for a reasonable work-life balance;

- Despite rising tuition costs across the country, they placed little emphasis on opportunities for bonus compensation.

Firms looking to attract the next generation of legal talent should ensure that their website presents a vision of the firm that appeals to new lawyers. Law firms should aim to strengthen mentorship programs and be aware that, when it comes to business development skills, new lawyers know that they still have a good deal to learn.

Are Law Students Prepared for Private Practice?

A Professional Degree Absent Professional Training

Universities are often criticized for focusing on theory while ignoring practicality and concrete skills. In their defence, it could be argued that it is the purview of universities to foster reasoning and advanced problem-solving abilities, not to provide training in workaday systems and techniques, which can, this argument suggests, be picked up on the job. According to the non-profit Law School Admission Council, in Canada "legal education is primarily academic in that students devote most of their time to mastering general concepts and principles that shape the law… Schools differ in the range and variety of practical education they offer." However, lawyers don't work in the realm of the merely theoretical. They work in firms with all-too-concrete budget constraints and client demands. Moreover, law school is billed as a professional degree. The vast majority of students hope to go on to take the bar and become practicing lawyers, which would require both an understanding of legal theory and professional training in how to thrive in a competitive legal services market.

Q: What field of law are you hoping will be your primary area of focus?

6%
EMPLOYMENT LAW

2%
CIVIL RIGHTS
LAW

12%
CRIMINAL LAW

23%
BUSINESS LAW

20%
UNSURE

LAW STUDENT SURVEY

Law Students Feel Unprepared for the Business Elements of Law

When asked whether law school had provided adequate professional training in the business of law, (how to pitch a client, how to price services, how to manage your practice, etc.) the majority of law students surveyed responded "Not at all" (66%). Only 2% of respondents felt that their law school had provided "adequate" professional training in the business side of the profession, while 23% felt the training to be "somewhat" adequate.

But isn't professional training what articling positions are for? These certainly provide valuable learning opportunities for law students. But should law firms be expected to provide this training or should the responsibility fall to law schools?

According to a 2015 U.S.-focused Lexis Nexis survey, 95%, of hiring partners and senior associates who supervise new attorneys responded that recently graduated students lack key practical skills at the time of hiring. The lawyers also noted that it's not that law schools are incapable of teaching these business skills, it's that they refuse to actually do so:

"Most attorneys involved with hiring and management of new lawyers agree practical skills can be effectively honed through clinics, internships, clerkships, and experience in actual or simulated application to a case."

Preparing for Change

As technology becomes more sophisticated, routine legal work is becoming increasingly automated, resulting in less demand for the entry-level services provided by articling students and an increase in competition for what positions remain. Against this background, law students' reported lack of business training should be cause for concern.

One law student described the current situation as such:

"I don't know why no one teaches [the business side of law] to outgoing students. I think law schools are a little bit behind what students want in some respects. There's no real training for students who might want to go straight from articling into their own practice. The assumption is that students will go into a large firm with the structure to support them, and they won't need to deal with billing or with attracting clients in certain ways, but you would have to do all of that as a sole practioner. Some students might have a business or marketing background, and so know how to market themselves, but a lot of students don't."

Q: Do you feel that law school has provided adequate professional training in the business of law? (How to pitch a client, how to price services, how to manage your practice, etc.)

Response	Percentage
Definitely	1.7%
Somewhat	22.7%
Not at all	65.8%
Unsure	9.8%
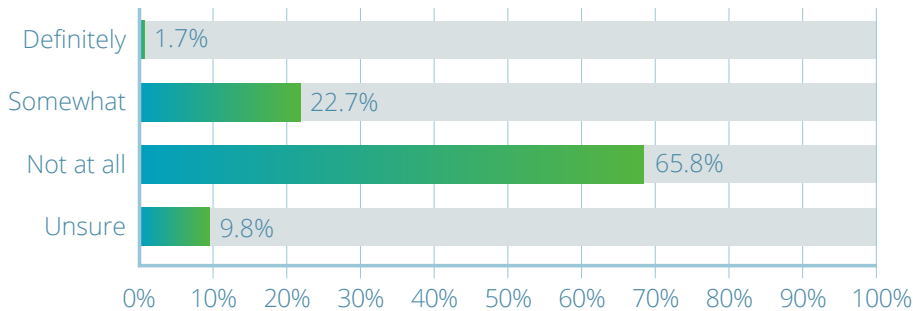
Student Methods for Researching Law Firms for Articling Positions

Websites are Key to Attracting Articling Students

When considering their options for summer articling positions, the majority of law students visited firm websites in the course of their research. 93% of survey respondents assessed law firms in this way. Law firm websites, it turns out, are important not only for impressing new clients and referral sources, but also for courting new hires. They give potential applicants a sense of what a firm is about. As one law student put it: "I find that the aesthetic and writing style on a firm website creates a subconscious impression of the firm and the kind of lawyers they are looking to bring on." Approximately 40% of respondents also look to a firm's social media pages for information about the firm.

Law Students Look First to Peers and Mentors for Guidance

Websites weren't the only method that law students used to assess their options for articling positions. 81% reported discussing their options with peers and mentors. Only 48% asked alumni for their opinions, which is surprising, since alumni are likely to have recent and relevant experience of available articling options. 47% of students turned to their university advisors for guidance, while 55% reported attending job fairs to get a better understanding of their options.

Online Guides and Rankings Inform Student Applicants

Some students reported turning to online guides, such as NALP, a Canadian Directory of Legal Employers, and viLawPortal and LawJobExchange, which are legal job search websites. Others considered firm rankings such as Chambers and Lexpert. One respondent mentioned looking at firm reviews on a more pedestrian rankings site: Yelp.

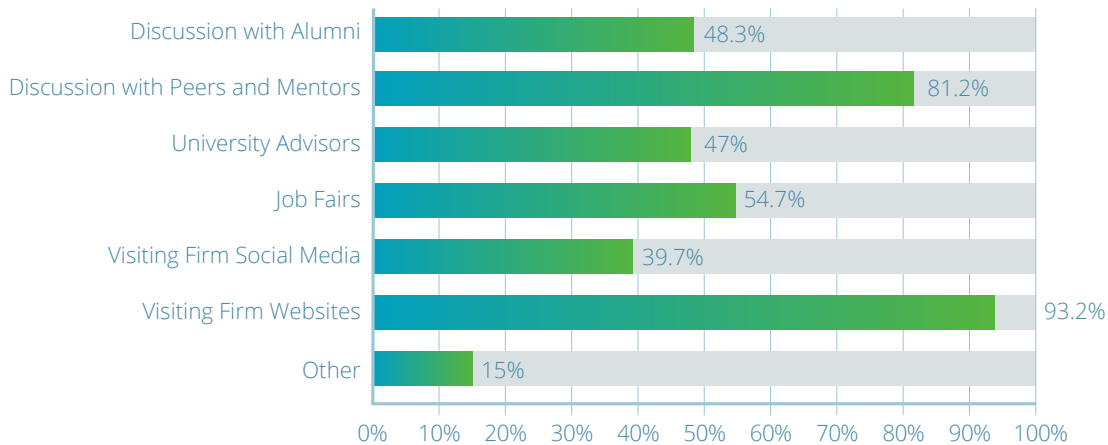## Some Students Meet Directly with Law Firms & Lawyers

After they had conducted their preliminary research, some law students went on tours of firms and spoke to the firm's lawyers directly. One respondent took to "cold calling the firm's current students" for their opinions. One respondent, noting the importance of networking, described their approach as "cocktails with firms", while a different student preferred to meet for "coffees with firm members".

It's Not Always Easy

While law students reported leveraging a variety of methods for researching firms, finding a position can still be a challenge. One student, reflecting the competition involved in obtaining a summer position, said that they had "Searched. Every. Law. Firm. In. The. City."

Q: When researching law firms for summer positions, which of the following methods did you rely on?

Method	Percentage
Discussion with Alumni	48.3%
Discussion with Peers and Mentors	81.2%
University Advisors	47%
Job Fairs	54.7%
Visiting Firm Social Media	39.7%
Visiting Firm Websites	93.2%
Other	15%

What Law Students are Looking for in a Career and in a Firm

Business Law is the Most Popular Choice for Students

When asked what field of law they were hoping to study, respondents provided a variety of answers. The most popular choice was "Business (Corporate) Law" for 24% of respondents. The second most popular choice was criminal law. 12% of prospective lawyers hope to make a career in this area. Family Law, Intellectual Property Law, and Labour Law each received approximately 6% of the vote. The least common choices include entertainment, real estate, and health law, which each received a marginal share falling between 1 - 2%. 8% of respondents were interested in an area of law not listed in the survey. This group was interested in aboriginal law, constitutional law, civil property law, public interest, marine, and animal rights law.
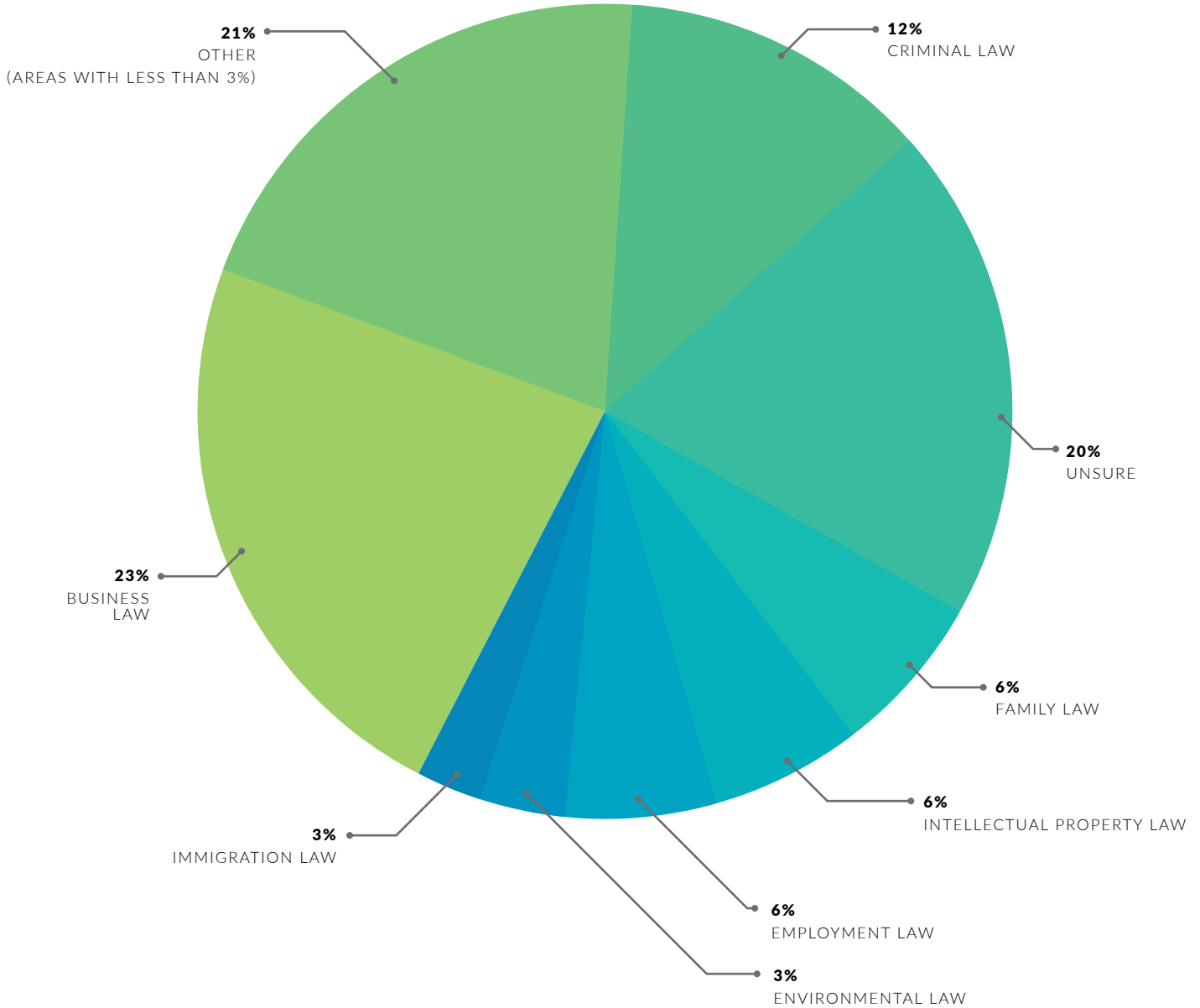
Many students are set on finding a firm that practices in a specific area of interest (e.g. human rights, patent law, etc.); 35% saw this as "very important" and 30% as "important".

A Fifth of Students Haven't Chosen a Focus

A sizable proportion of respondents were unsure about which area of law to pursue: nearly 20% had not yet settled on an area of focus. Perhaps due to this, 36% percent of respondents judged focusing on a specific area of interest to be only "somewhat important" (26%) or "not important" (10%).
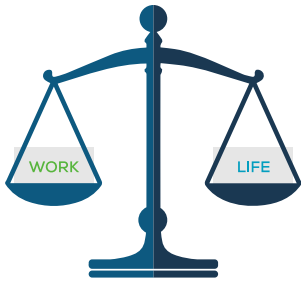
21%
OTHER
(AREAS WITH LESS THAN 3%)

12%
CRIMINAL LAW

20%
UNSURE

23%
BUSINESS
LAW

6%
FAMILY LAW

6%
INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY LAW

3%
IMMIGRATION LAW

6%
EMPLOYMENT LAW

3%
ENVIRONMENTAL LAW

FOR FURTHER BREAKDOWN OF RESULTS, SEE PAGE 21.

Work-Life Balance is Paramount

When students were asked to rate various law firm attributes based on their importance, they placed the greatest emphasis on achieving a healthy work-life balance. 85% reported that work-life balance was either "very important"(52%) or "important" (33%). Only 2% of respondents dismissed this attribute as "not important". As one law student put it:

"The profession of law has a bad reputation for workaholic culture…I'm looking for a firm that doesn't put pressure on lawyers to stay late every night and come in every weekend—one that recognizes that we have a life outside of the office too."

Q: Rate these law firm attributes based on how important they are to you
Work/Life Balance:

Very Important: 52.1%
Important: 33.3%
Somewhat Important: 12.4%
Not Important: 2.2%
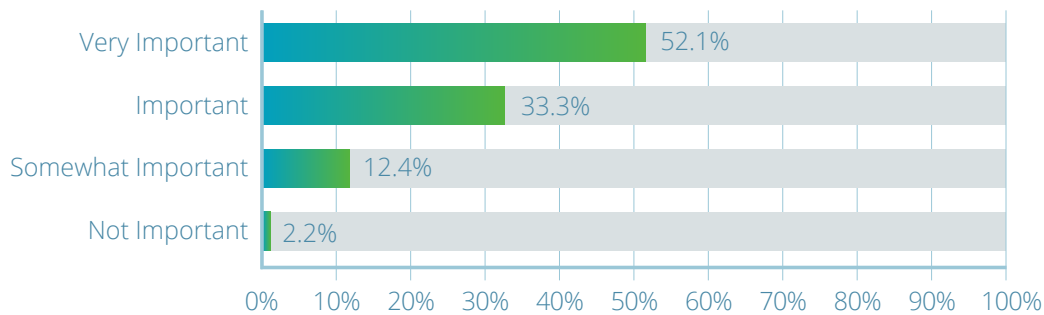
Students are Looking for Mentorship

85% of students judged mentorship programs to be "important" or "very important". Only 3% of students viewed mentorship programs as "not important". One law student described how the lawyer she'd articled with the previous summer had spent a lot of time outlining the process of running a successful business; the student described this experience as "extremely valuable". Another student used the word "essential" to describe mentorship opportunities.

Value Placed in Formal Training Programs

Formal legal training programs were judged to be "important" or "very important" by 81% of students. As previously noted, most law students feel that their law schools have not provided them with adequate training in the business of law. Perhaps because of this, 61% of respondents said that it was "important" for a law firm to offer formal training in business skills (business development, marketing, etc.). One student stated: "One of the reasons I was motivated to go to law school is because I want to have a career in which I'm constantly learning and I think that its implicit in law, with evolving jurisprudence, that you are constantly learning. Any training where you get a chance to glance outside of the narrow box of what you're working on is important."

Firm Reputation an Unsuprising Factor

A firm's reputation was also a significant factor for students, with 78% describing this as "important" or "very important". Interestingly, while firm reputation was deemed a central factor, only 29% reported a firm's involvement in the higher courts as "important" or as "very important".

Support Staff More Important than State-of-the-Art Technology

In considering a firm's internal tech resources, staff, and level of innovation, students put the greatest emphasis on the quality of a firm's support staff: described as "very important" or "important" by 79% of respondents. Meanwhile a culture of "innovative and non-traditional approaches to legal services" was seen as "very important" by only 18%, and as either "very important" or "important" by a slight majority of 51%. Only 35% felt that the integration of technological solutions were "important" or "very important" in a firm.

Students Not Seeing the Value of a Bonus

Surprisingly, despite increasing tuition fees in law schools across the country and increasing levels of student debt, respondents placed little emphasis on opportunities for bonus compensation: a quarter dismissed opportunities for bonus compensation as "not important", with another 38% describing this as only "somewhat important". Only 14% valued this quality enough to mark it as very important.

Don't Expect Your Firm Social Events to Be a Selling Point

While it is true that students put a great deal of stock in a firm that offers work-life balance, that doesn't mean that they are looking for a firm that hosts regular social events. Only 7% described these as "very important" in a firm. 41% of respondents deemed these to be "somewhat important" and a full 24% dismissed them as "not important" at all. The takeaway? New lawyers are likely to prefer a firm that offers formal training programs over a firm that hosts regular cocktail parties.

Students are Split on the Ideal Compensation Arrangement

When asked which work arrangement they would prefer, students showed a variety of preferences with no option rising to the fore. The most popular option, by a thin margin, was a combination of "lower starting salary; lower billable hour expectation". Following this in popularity was the exact opposite arrangement: "higher starting salary; higher billable hour expectation"—this despite the fact that 85% of students placed a high importance on achieving work-life balance. One law student made this comment: "I've always expected that I'd have to sacrifice my social life to get where I want to be." 21% expressed a preference for alternative compensation methods, while 21% were unsure about what compensation arrangement they would prefer.

Q: Which work arrangement would you prefer?

Higher starting salary; higher billable hour expectation	26.1%
Lower starting salary; lower billable hour expectation	31.6%
Alternative compensation models	20.9%
Unsure	21.4%

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%
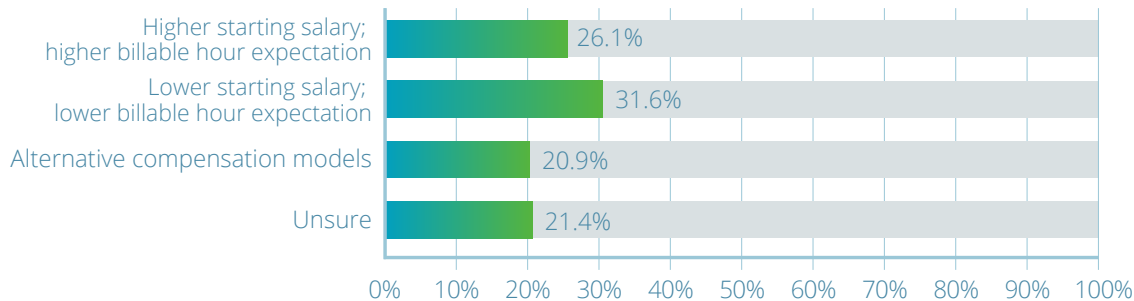
LAW STUDENT SURVEY

Law Students and Law Firms' Digital Presence

Firm Websites are Key to Connecting with Law Students

In this digital age, the majority of firms recognize the importance of their website: they provide clients with information about a firm's services, facilitate the sharing of resources and insights, and form the cornerstone of law firm digital marketing strategy. Firms can add to that list the importance of websites in attracting new hires. 58% of respondents said that a firm's website was "important" (32%) or "very important" (26%) in their decision to apply for a position at a firm. Only 6% reported a firm's website to be "not important" in their decision, leaving 36% to report this factor as "somewhat important".

Websites can Affect Student Perception of Firm Quality

While these figures support the position that law firm websites are an important factor in attracting new hires, it is likely that websites are even more important than these numbers suggest. This 58% represents only the respondents who were consciously aware of a sites' influence in their decision-making process. The number who were swayed in their choice without knowing it is likely to be even higher. Indeed, a full 93% of respondents said that they had visited law firm websites while researching potential firms for summer positions.

Like an office or a lobby, the aesthetic and quality of a website influences visitor perceptions of the firm and the quality of the service provided. As one law student noted:

"I wouldn't have automatically have said no to [law firms] based solely on their websites…But it did have some effect. If you're looking at a firm's website and you already don't like the look of it and it's annoying to get to certain pages… it's not an obvious factor but I'm sure that, at least subconsciously, I took it into account. I remember there was one website where I really didn't like how it was laid out and I just thought, 'Ah, I'm just not going to apply to this one.'"

Another law student observed that a poor quality website had negatively affected their perception of a firm: "there's one Canada-wide firm, their website is so hard to navigate. I worked in tech for a year and bad websites just bother me. If it's not intuitive, why bother?"

Most Firms Don't Need a Separate Student Site

While students placed a good deal of importance in the quality of firm websites, they were less convinced of the need for a firm to maintain a separate website for students. 33% of respondents thought that this was "very important" (12%) or "important" (21%). While 37% deemed it "not important", leaving 29% who judged separate student websites to be "somewhat important".

Law Students Put Little Stock in Social Media

While 40% of students reported investigating firm social media accounts in the course of their research, only 12% felt that it was "important" for a firm to have a strong social media presence. 27% though that having a robust presence on LinkedIn or Facebook was "somewhat important", while a majority (60%) considered this to be "not important" in a firm. However one law student pointed out that "when you find a firm you're interested in, you'll start looking at their articles, their social media; you look into what they're publishing and what they're talking about."

Of course, attracting articling students is only one reason for a law firm to maintain social media accounts. For most firms, social media can serve as a useful complement to their website, as a source of referral traffic, and as another channel through which to share content and firm news.

Methodology

In the fall of 2017, fSquared Marketing distributed the Law Student Survey 2018—The Mindset of the Millennial Law Student, to a group of Canadian law students studying at law schools across the country. This survey was distributed within law students groups, through LinkedIn, and with the generous help of numerous law students. Respondents were asked to identify the school they were attending and their expected year of graduation. In total, 234 law students completed the survey.

The results of this survey were tabulated and analyzed by fSquared Marketing.

Within the survey report, percentages in certain questions may exceed 100 percent because participants may have been asked to "check all that apply". In some cases, percentages have been rounded to one decimal place.

Metrics

Current Year of Study	Responses	Percentage
1st Year	20	8.5%
2nd Year	62	26.5%
3rd Year	80	34.2%
Articling	47	20.1%
Recent Graduate	21	9%
Masters, Dual Degree, or other 4-year Program:	4	1.7%

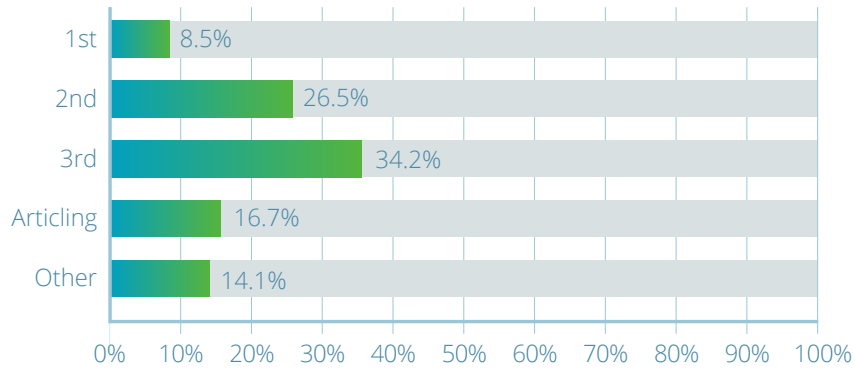| Expected Year of Graduation	Responses	Percentage
Graduated 2016 or earlier	14	6%
2017	56	23.9%
2018	80	34.2%
2019	63	26.9%
2020	20	8.6%
2021	1	0.4%

DEMOGRAPHICS

- University of Victoria Faculty of Law
- UBC: Peter A. Allard School of Law
- Thomson Rivers University Faculty of Law
- U Alberta Law
- University of Saskatchewan College of Law
- University of Manitoba: Robson Hall Faculty of Law
- Lakehead: Bora Laskin Faculty of Law
- University of Windsor Faculty of Law
- Western Law
- Queen's Faculty of Law

- Osgoode Hall Law School
- University of Toronto Faculty of Law
- L'Université du Québec à Montréal Law
- Université de Montréal Faculty of Law
- McGill University Faculty of Law
- La Faculté de droit de l'Université Laval
- University Of Sherbrooke Faculty Of Law
- University of Ottawa Faculty of Law
- University of New Brunswick Faculty of Law
- Dalhousie: Schulich School of Law

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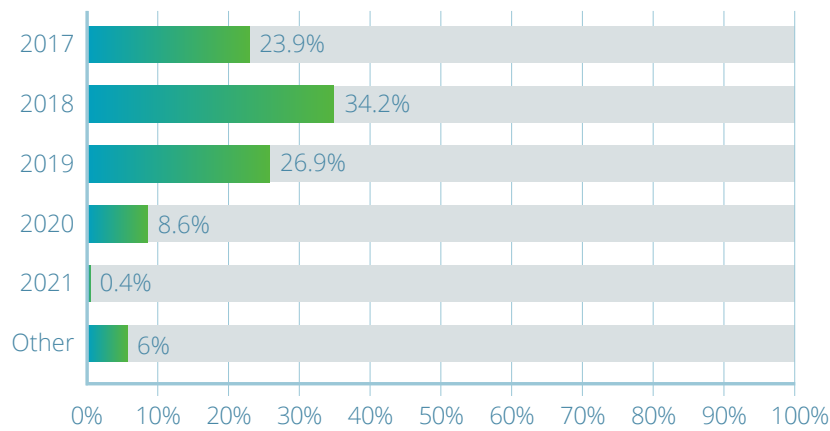
THE RESULTS

Q: Current year of law school

Year	Percentage
1st	8.5%
2nd	26.5%
3rd	34.2%
Articling	16.7%
Other	14.1%

Q: Expected year of graduation

Year	Percentage
2017	23.9%
2018	34.2%
2019	26.9%
2020	8.6%
2021	0.4%
Other	6%

What field of law are you hoping will be your primary area of focus?

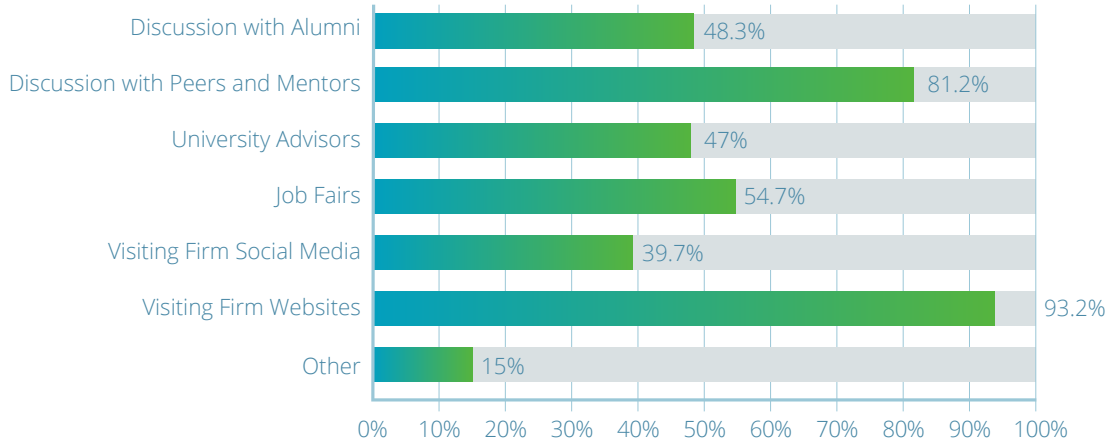| Field	Percentage
Business (Corporate) Law	23%
Civil Rights Law	2%
Criminal Law	12%
Entertainment Law	1%
Environmental Law	3%
Family Law	6%
Health Law	1%
Immigration Law	3%
Intellectual Property Law	6%
International Law	2%
Labour (Employment) Law	6%
Personal Injury Law	2%
Real Estate Law	1%
Tax Law	2%
Unsure	21%
Other	8%

Q: Do you feel that law school has provided adequate professional training in the business of law? (How to pitch a client, how to price services, how to manage your practice, etc.)

Response	Percentage
Definitely	1.7%
Somewhat	22.7%
Not at all	65.8%
Unsure	9.8%

LAW STUDENT SURVEY
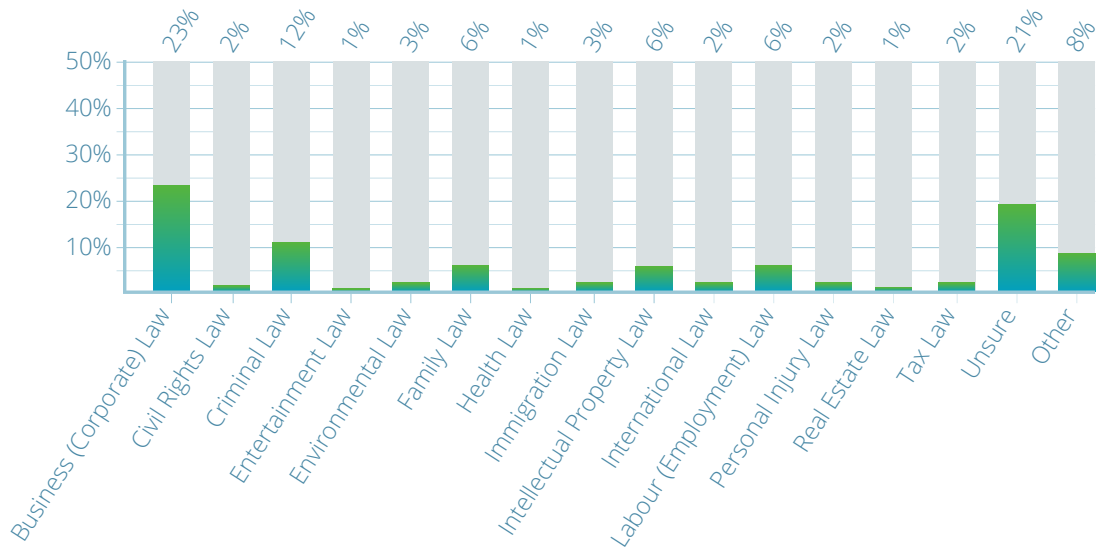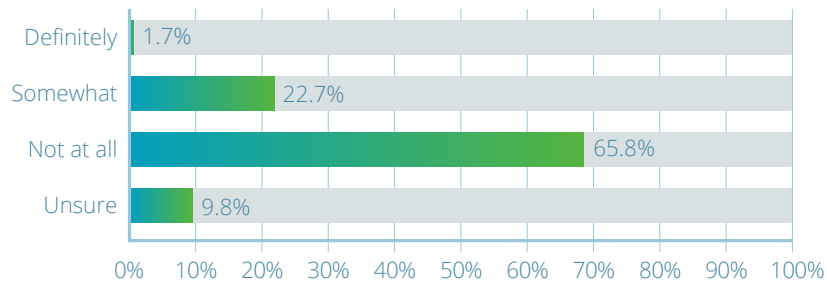
When researching law firms for summer positions, which of the following methods did you rely on? (check all that apply)

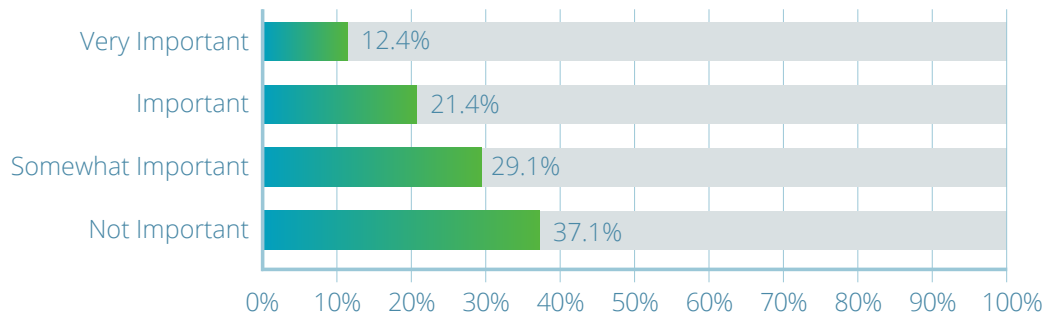| Method	Percentage
Discussion with Alumni	48.3%
Discussion with Peers and Mentors	81.2%
University Advisors	47%
Job Fairs	54.7%
Visiting Firm Social Media	39.7%
Visiting Firm Websites	93.2%
Other	15%

Q:

When researching law firms online, how important was the firm's website in your decision to apply?

| Importance	Percentage
Very Important	26.1%
Important	32.1%
Somewhat Important	36.3%
Not Important	5.5%
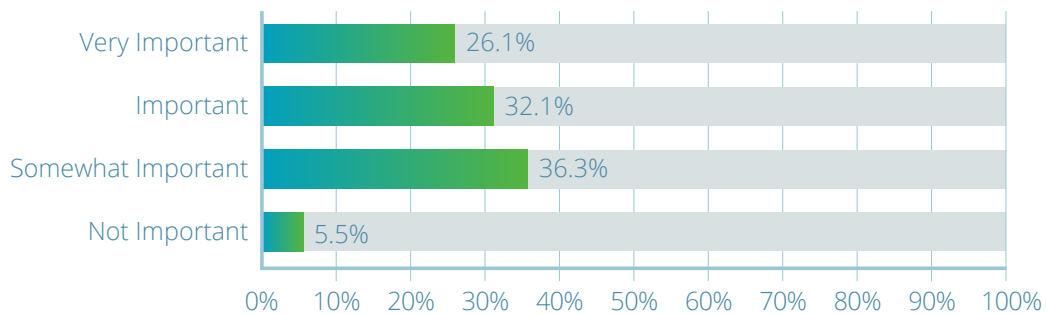
Q: When researching law firms online, how important was it for the firm to have a seperate student website?

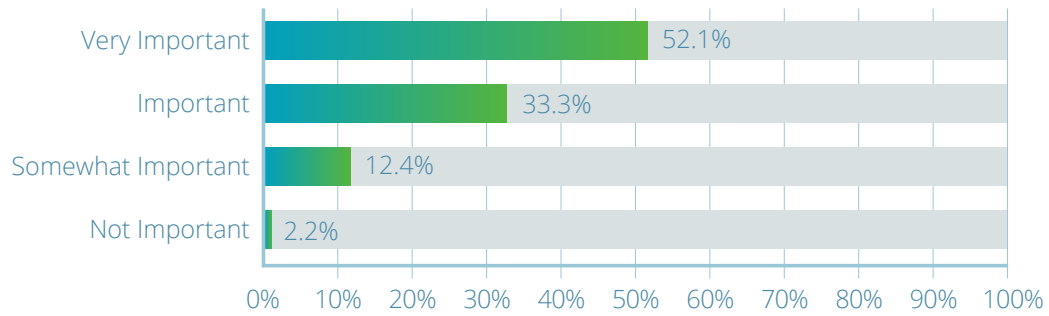| Rating	Percentage
Very Important	12.4%
Important	21.4%
Somewhat Important	29.1%
Not Important	37.1%

Q: During your research, how important was it for a law firm to have a strong social media presence? (e.g. LinkedIn page, Facebook page, etc.)
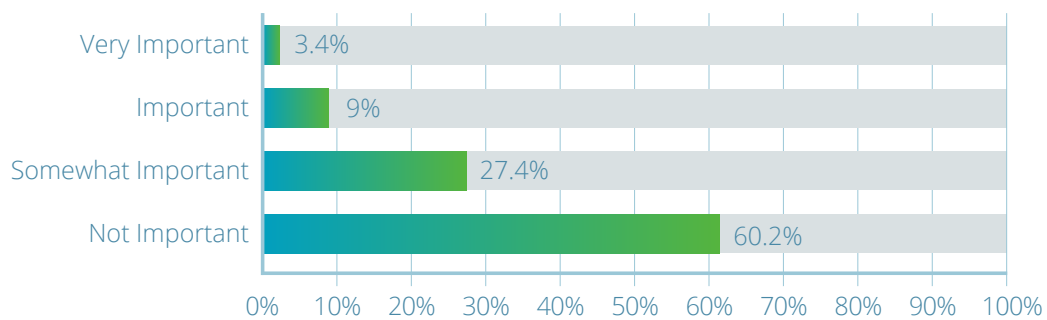
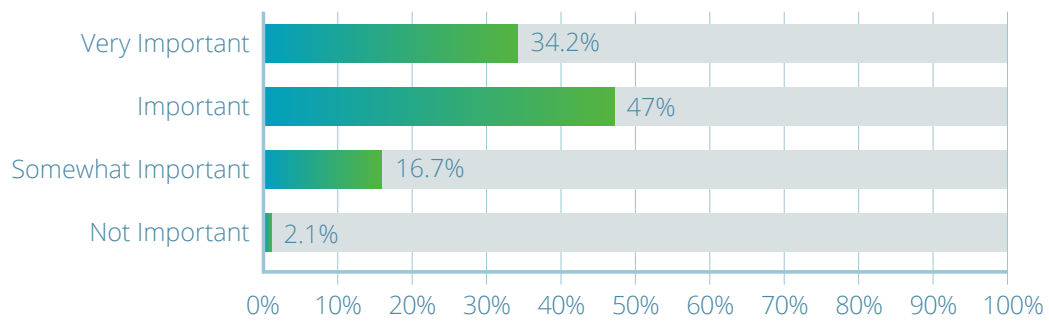| Rating	Percentage
Very Important	3.4%
Important	9%
Somewhat Important	27.4%
Not Important	60.2%

Q: Rate these law firm attributes based on how important they are to you:
Work/Life Balance

Very Important	52.1%
Important	33.3%
Somewhat Important	12.4%
Not Important	2.2%

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

Q: Rate these law firm attributes based on how important they are to you:
Formal Legal Training Programs

Very Important	34.2%
Important	47%
Somewhat Important	16.7%
Not Important	2.1%

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

Q: Rate these law firm attributes based on how important they are to you:
Quality of support staff

	Percentage
Very Important	33.8%
Important	45.7%
Somewhat Important	15.4%
Not Important	5.1%

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%
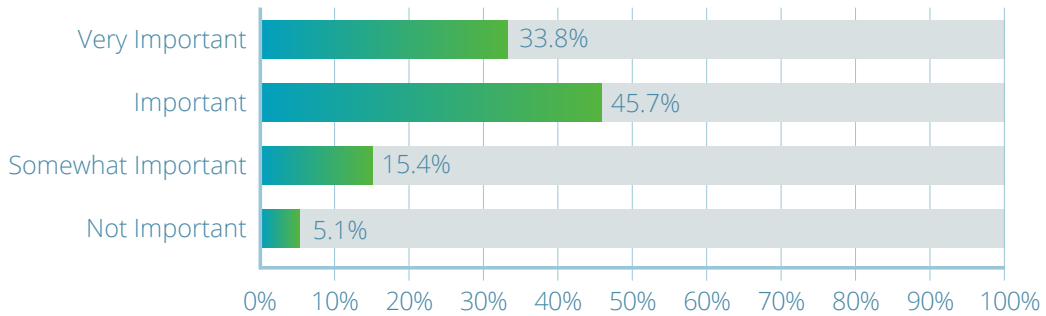
Q: Rate these law firm attributes based on how important they are to you:
Mentorship Programs

|	Percentage
Very Important	48.3%
Important	37.2%
Somewhat Important	12%
Not Important	2.5%

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%
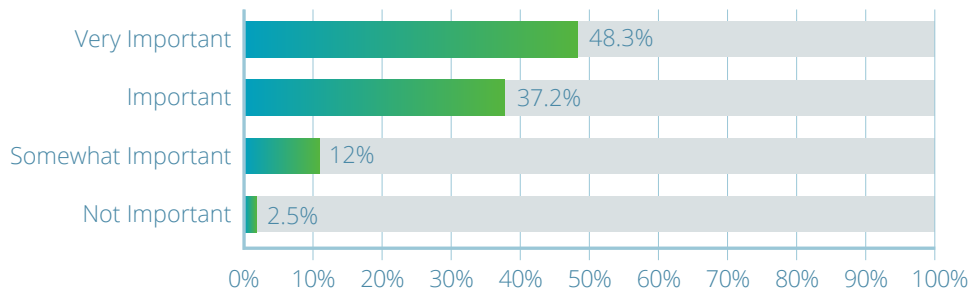
Q: Rate these law firm attributes based on how important they are to you:
Formal business-skill training programs (business development, marketing, business of law, etc.)
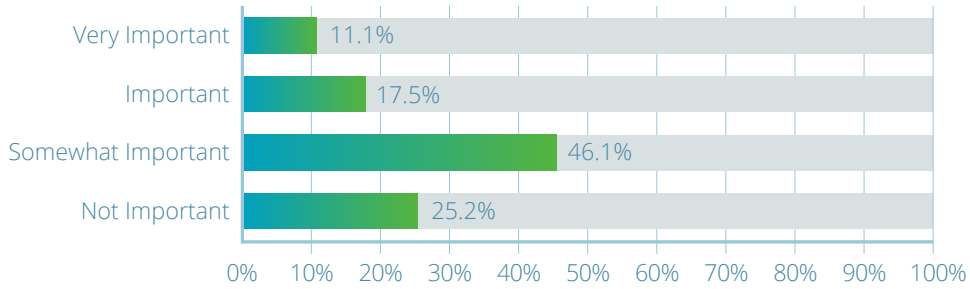
Rating	Percentage
Very Important	20.5%
Important	40.2%
Somewhat Important	29.9%
Not Important	9.4%
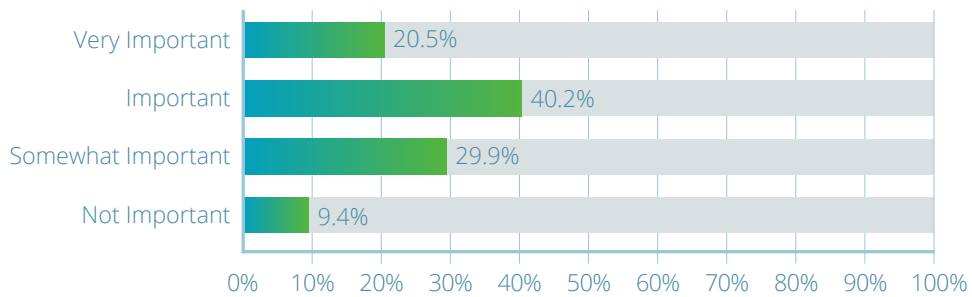
Q: Rate these law firm attributes based on how important they are to you:
Firm Reputation

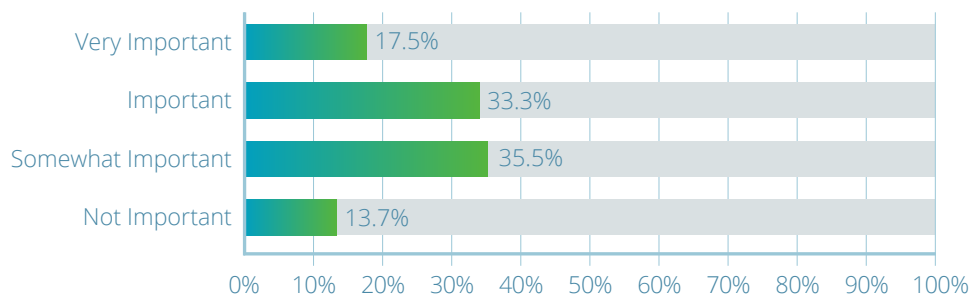| Rating	Percentage
Very Important	36.3%
Important	41.9%
Somewhat Important	19.2%
Not Important	2.6%
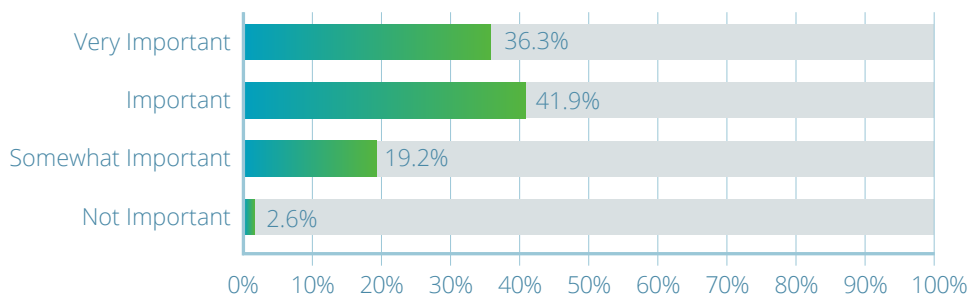
Rate these law firm attributes based on how important they are to you:
Firm involvement in higher courts

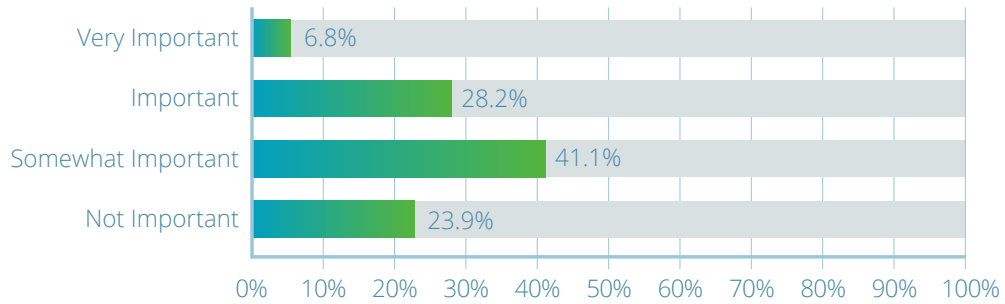| Rating	Percentage
Very Important	11.1%
Important	17.5%
Somewhat Important	46.1%
Not Important	25.2%

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

Q:

Rate these law firm attributes based on how important they are to you:
Innovative and non-traditional approaches to legal services

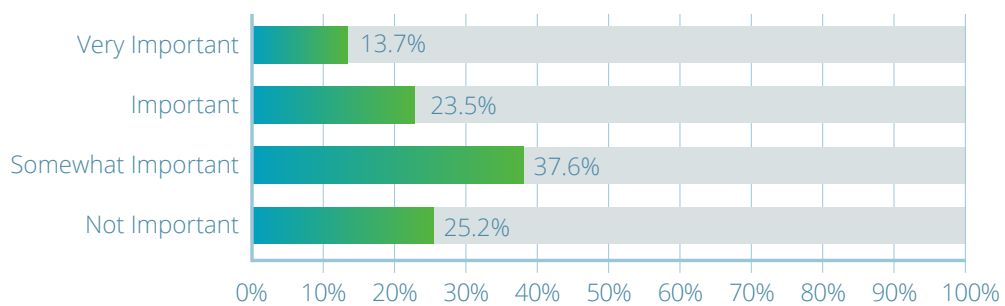| Rating	Percentage
Very Important	17.5%
Important	33.3%
Somewhat Important	35.5%
Not Important	13.7%

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

Q: Rate these law firm attributes based on how important they are to you:
Firm Social Events

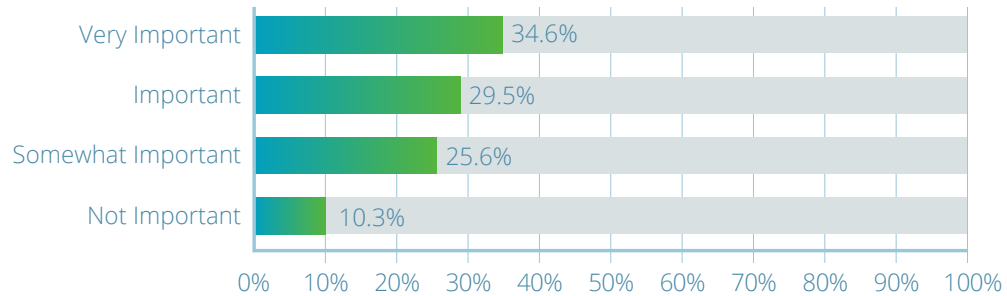|	
Very Important	6.8%
Important	28.2%
Somewhat Important	41.1%
Not Important	23.9%

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

Q: Rate these law firm attributes based on how important they are to you:
Opportunities for bonus compensation

Very Important	13.7%
Important	23.5%
Somewhat Important	37.6%
Not Important	25.2%

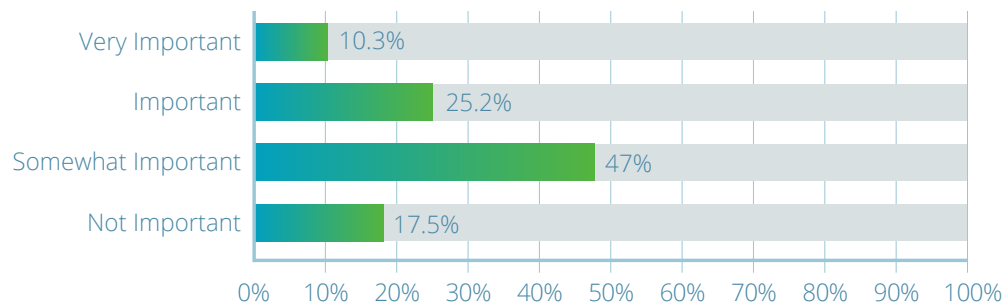0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

Q: Rate these law firm attributes based on how important they are to you:
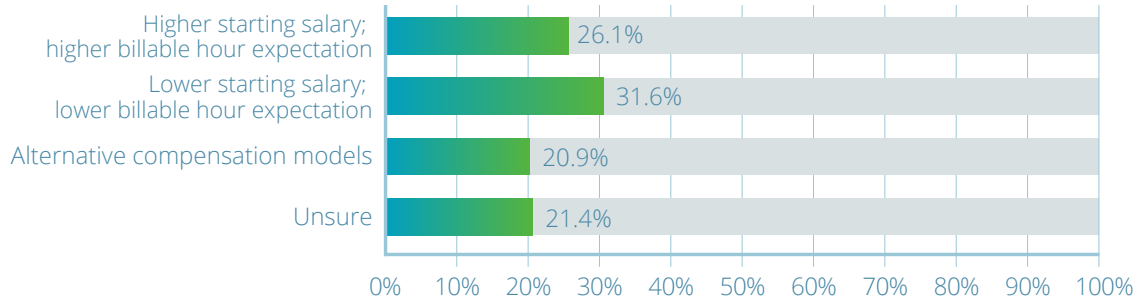**Focus on a specific area of interest (e.g. Human Rights, Patent Law, etc.)**

Very Important	34.6%
Important	29.5%
Somewhat Important	25.6%
Not Important	10.3%

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

Q: Rate these law firm attributes based on how important they are to you:
Integrating technological soloutions

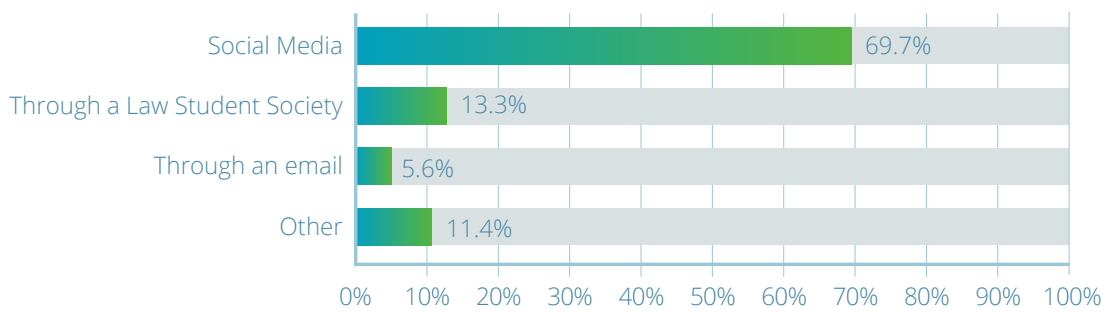|	
Very Important	10.3%
Important	25.2%
Somewhat Important	47%
Not Important	17.5%

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

Q: Which work arrangement would you prefer?

Higher starting salary; higher billable hour expectation	26.1%
Lower starting salary; lower billable hour expectation	31.6%
Alternative compensation models	20.9%
Unsure	21.4%

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

Q: Where did you find this survey?

Social Media	69.7%
Through a Law Student Society	13.3%
Through an email	5.6%
Other	11.4%

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

THE STUDENT INTERVIEWS

Gabe Hoogers

B.C.L., LL.B. Candidate at
McGill University

About Gabe

Gabe Hoogers is completing his final semester at McGill's Faculty of Law in the combined B.C.L/LL.B. program. During his studies, he has devoted his time to research in labour and employment law, and volunteering for Project Genesis, where he provided legal information in welfare and housing law to residents of the Côte-des-Neiges neighbourhood. Post-law school, Gabe will continue working in labour and employment law in Ottawa, where he looks forward to the cycling, hiking, and craft beer of the region while he completes his articles.

Q: **Once you find a position at a firm, what sort of ongoing training are you hoping that firm will provide?**

Mentorship is essential. So is exposure to different areas of law, even if it's not billable, like attending a hearing to see what that's like. Training more formally is obviously a plus. One of the reasons I was motivated to go to law school is because I want to have a career in which I'm constantly learning and I think that implicit in law, with evolving jurisprudence, is that you are constantly learning. Any training where you get a chance to glance outside of the narrow box of what you're working on is important as well.

Q: **How have you conducted research into prospective law firms?**

I have attended career fairs and I've spoken to people about the firms that are out there, but at a certain point, beyond a brief interaction at a career fair, you're going to go and look into the firm in greater depth. I've found information on forums such as lawstudents.ca, and sometimes forums on Social Media can provide the names of some potential options, but ultimately, you're going to look at the firm's website. There you'll get a sense of the type of work that they do, the firm's focus.

I find that the actual aesthetic and writing style on a firm website creates a subconscious impression of the firm and the kinds of lawyers that they're looking to bring on.

Melia Moorhouse

J.D. Candidate at Dalhousie University's
Schulich School of Law

DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY
SCHULICH SCHOOL OF LAW

About Melia

Melia Moorhouse is studying at Dalhousie University's Schulich School of Law. She served on the executive of her alma matter's Environmental Law Students Society and Lawyers Without Borders. Hailing from Quesnel, BC, Melia completed her undergraduate degree in Political Science, Philosophy, and Economics at UBC Okanagan in 2014. An outdoor enthusiast, Melia enjoys hiking, camping, and climbing.

Q: **When you're looking into law firms, what are some of the values that are most important to you?**

The profession of law has a bit of a reputation for a workaholic culture. The reality is that yes, you need to stay late sometimes, especially since work ebbs and flows depending how busy you are. It's important to work in an environment that encourages good work but also encourages a healthy balance. I'm looking for a firm that recognizes that balance.

I'm also looking for as many opportunities as possible to continue to learn. Which is why I personally didn't necessarily go with a smaller firm because I knew that I needed somewhere where I could get a diverse range of experiences.

Q: **How did you find your current summer articling position?**

Firms of this size have a similar hiring process. I did a firm tour which in the summer before the hiring process began. I also heard a lot about the different firms from past students.

We have a career development office as well, and they were helpful. I also looked at different websites, the reputations, the different areas of practice, and so on. But the best thing to do is to talk to people because websites tend to be quite similar across firms. After we did firm tours, I was able to email associates and current students to ask them more detailed questions. It's important and helpful to follow-up.

Q: **Did any websites that you saw immediately dissuade you from contacting a firm?**

Not really, I don't think, because you can't gauge too much from that. Some websites you'd see and it would seem like they hadn't put too much effort into it. The actual content is largely the same across firms. And I wouldn't automatically say no to them based solely on their websites, but it has some effect on first impressions.

If you're looking at a firm's website and you already don't like the look of it and it's annoying to get to certain pages... it's not an obvious factor but I'm sure that, at least subconsciously, I took it into account. I remember there was one website where I really didn't like how it was laid out and I just thought, "Ah, I'm just not going to apply to this one."

LAW STUDENT SURVEY

Amelia Wilding

J.D., M.A. Candidate at University of Ottawa's Faculty of Law and the Norman Paterson School of International Affairs

uOttawa

About Amelia

Amelia Wilding is entering her third year of a four-year combined Juris Doctor and Master's program at the University of Ottawa's Faculty of Law and the Norman Paterson School of International Affairs. Her legal interests lie in the realm of human rights, especially in the context of criminal, immigration and refugee law. When not pouring over law texts in local cafes, she can be found spending time with her dog (plural if she has a foster) and enjoying funky beer and wine with her partner.

Q: **As a law student, do you feel that you will receive sufficient training in the business side of law, (how to attract clients, how to build a book of work, etc.)?**

Not really. It's all very course-based. The woman I was working for last summer spent a lot of time explaining how she runs her business. That is so valuable. I don't know why no one teaches that to outgoing students. I think law schools are a little bit behind what students want in some respects. There's no real training for students who might want to go straight from articling into their own practice. The assumption is that students will go into a large firm with the structure to support them, and they won't need to deal with billing or with attracting clients in certain ways, but you would have to do all of that as a sole practioner. Some students might have a business or marketing background, and so know how to market themselves, but a lot of students don't. I think there is room for improvement on that side of things.

Q: **Are networking activities encouraged?**

There are numerous networking events with firms and students, so they do well on that front. There just isn't much information for students who may be interested in learning how to run their own business.

Q: **Have you been doing any research into firms or individuals that you might like to work with?**

They tell you to start doing that in your first year, and I have done some research into some of the larger firms in Vancouver (where I'm from). There are some corporate firms that do work in Aboriginal land claims and First Nations development and things of that nature. That's the side of larger firms I am interested in, along with immigration law.

They usually have good websites that provide clear information and connect you with the right people. But most research is done through word of mouth: you discuss your interests and people say, "Oh, you should look at this firm."

Q: **Have you ever come across a firm where you've been immediately dissuaded by the quality of their website?**

There are a few...there's one Canada-wide firm, their website is so hard to navigate. I worked in tech for a year and bad websites just bother me. If it's not intuitive, why bother?

About fSquared Marketing

fSquared Marketing provides strategic consulting and marketing services to law firms. We offer clients a full spectrum of services, including strategic planning, digital strategy, business development, client management, branding, website design, and lawyer training.

fSquared Marketing's expertise comes from our thorough understanding of the North American legal marketplace and our detailed knowledge of the particular needs of Canadian firms. We take pride in offering practical, measurable, and proven solutions to the challenges our clients face. The team at fSquared Marketing can both develop strategic plans and implement them, with a focus on growth. We know law firms, and we get results.

To learn more about fSquared Marketing and the services we offer, visit **fsquaredmarketing.com.**