

Is It Time for Marketing and Business Development Courses in Law School?

By [Jim Cranston](#) on March 24, 2016

Why don't more law schools offer courses that teach the basics of branding, marketing and business development? This would have been unheard of fifteen years ago (when I first joined the legal industry), but today . . . only a select few law schools have recognized the importance of marketing and business development and have begun offering their future lawyers relevant and practical skills to succeed in today's market. In a recent Law360 article titled "[Law Schools are \(Finally\) Teaching the Biz of Lawyering](#)" author Howard Breuer suggests that academia has finally taken notice and has started creating programs to help educate its students. According to Silvia Hodges Silverstein in the same article, "I believe that those are skills that everybody needs to have in their toolkit whether you're working as an associate or hanging out your own shingle. You always need to know how to develop your business. These are skills that will be serving them for the rest of their careers."

One advocate for change in our education system has been [William Henderson](#), a professor at Indiana University's Maurer School of Law. About law schools in general, Henderson says, "They think if you were smart academically, you're competent in all dimensions, and that's fundamentally wrong."

In a recent column by Doug Ferguson "[Does Law School Reflect the Legal Profession?](#)" he points out that in a recent "CBA National article, legal futurist Jordan Furlong says the answer is no. He believes that law schools do not provide a 'competitive set of skills and knowledge, tools and experience' for students to draw upon after graduation.' He goes further and states that few law schools would even acknowledge this fact . . . It appears to me that we have now come full circle. A legal education based exclusively on theory and legal principles is not enough to adapt to the practice of law in the 21st century."

So, is it time for law schools to offer a broader range of business-skills, to at least bring an awareness to today's law students prior to entering the job market? What do you think?