

CitySneak:

the ultimate alumni?

In this regular feature, **In Law** catches up with former students who have really made their mark on the legal world.

In this issue, **Craig Robinson**, co-author of the **Ultimate Guide to Training Contract Success**, talks about his highly successful book, his experiences within the legal field and his time at The City Law School.

The **Ultimate Law Guide**, is a group of qualified solicitors, who studied law at City and went on to train with leading City law firms.

They aim to help would-be solicitors in securing a training contract by providing first-hand knowledge of the training contract selection process to assist students in becoming better informed and more effective in planning for their legal careers - helping to bridge the gap between education and employment.

Their book, the **Ultimate Guide to Training Contract Success**, assists aspiring solicitors by providing practical solutions to the many challenges and common pitfalls involved in trying to forge a successful career.

As Craig points out, breaking into the legal profession is no mean feat and like many other talented aspiring solicitors, he found it very challenging to secure a training contract at first. "I felt there was a real need for a singular, all-encompassing source of reference for potential trainees to turn to for practical guidance at the all-important early stages of their career".

"We all require advice at some point during our journey to becoming a lawyer and I have often seen many prospective trainee solicitors left behind in the competition to secure training contracts, simply because they had initially been less informed and less prepared about the various routes available. In some cases they also lacked an awareness of the qualities that law firms expect of a budding solicitor" adds Craig.

Whilst going through the process of applying for training contracts, the authors of the Guide, learned that it was essential that students acquire work experience in order to gain some insight into what legal practice is all about, to gain the ability to build networks and work collaboratively with others, and develop a measure of self confidence.

"We successfully secured a training contract at top City law firms, and want to give something back by helping to inspire the next generation of lawyers and empowering students to achieve their career goals. We want to help students by sharing our knowledge and experiences to help them go on and enjoy a successful and rewarding legal career." explains Craig.

The **Ultimate Guide to Training Contract Success** walks students through every aspect of the training contract recruitment process. It gives useful tips on how to write "top-level" application forms for the most competitive law firms, how to improve interviewing technique and offers an insight on what to expect as a trainee solicitor.

"While some law schools, including The City Law School, offer exceptional careers advisory services, some students are not sufficiently motivated to use these opportunities to their best advantage and can struggle when making important early decisions.

As a result, students sometimes miss the recruitment milk-round of the larger law firms (which recruit two years in advance of the training contract start date). Students need as much help as they can get with this process and should be using all the available resources they have access to, including our Guide..." comments Craig.

In addition to some of the training contract process information offered, the Guide also has chapters on commercial awareness and networking, and the examples of questions asked at interviews are invaluable - as are the suggested answers and case studies!

The **Ultimate Law Guide** team has also recently launched a **Commercial Awareness Forum**, in partnership with Practical Law Company ("PLC"), which provides students with free access to articles and podcasts on legal and business issues to help them stay abreast of commercial/legal developments during their studies or in a gap year.

This unique and innovative resource helps students (and current trainees) understand the business of a law firm and the environment in which law firms' operate. The "know-how" content covers recent topics of commercial interest to help build-up students and trainees commercial awareness which will be invaluable in their future legal career.

CONTACT BOX

For more information on the **Ultimate Guide to Training Contract Success**, please visit: www.ultimatelawguide.com