



Alison Monahan: Welcome back to the Law School Toolbox podcast. Today, we're talking with ex-BigLaw recruiter Sadie Jones, about how to find a job outside of the OCI process. Your Law School Toolbox host is Alison Monahan, and typically I'm with Lee Burgess. We're here to demystify the law school and early legal career experience so that you'll be the best law student and lawyer you can be.

Together, we're the co-creators of the [Law School Toolbox](#), the [Bar Exam Toolbox](#), and the career related website [CareerDicta](#). I also run [The Girl's Guide to Law School](#). If you enjoy the show, please leave a review or rating on your favorite listening app. And if you have any questions don't hesitate to reach out to us. You can always reach us via the [contact form](#) on LawSchoolToolBox.com, and we would love to hear from you. With that, let's get started.

Welcome back to the Law School Toolbox podcast. Today, we're talking with ex-BigLaw recruiter Sadie Jones, about how to find a job outside of the OCI process. So welcome, Sadie.

Sadie Jones: Thanks for having me.

Alison Monahan: My pleasure. Alright, so say somebody has struck out at OCI or maybe they just never did it to start with. How are they going to find a job?

Sadie Jones: There are lots of ways to find a job outside of OCI. That's just a very specific process that does make it easier, but I think that there are lots of options for other ways.

Alison Monahan: Yeah. And I think one thing to keep in mind is realistically, this is actually what most people have to do. So, if you are feeling sorry for yourself and you're feeling like all of your classmates got jobs and it was so easy for them, the real reality is, most people do not get their jobs through OCI, so you are not alone. And there are definitely a lot of options. You will almost certainly find something eventually.

Sadie Jones: Absolutely. I think it's just about having a plan. Also, in the real world, after all this stuff, you're going to have to look for jobs in other ways also. So, OCI does seem sort of like everything's neatly tied with a bow, but that's just not the way it's going to work going forward and it's not the way it usually works.

Alison Monahan: I think that's a great point. Most people in the world do not have a bunch of firms just show up and present them with jobs, and that will never happen again. It would only happen once for you. So, even if you found your job through OCI and you're thinking this does not apply to you and you can tune out now, if you even opened this episode, you might want to listen, because actually you're probably not going to have that job forever. If you think that you're going to, I'm



the sorry voice of reality, which says most likely, statistically speaking, you will be searching for other jobs in the future.

Sadie Jones: Yeah. So I think these tips are good for anyone looking for any job.

Alison Monahan: I agree. And through this, we're actually going to work through a framework that was developed by a friend of ours named Katie Slater, who at the time was a lawyer turned career coach. Unfortunately for everyone who wants her help, she does not do that anymore. But she has this great [framework on The Girl's Guide to Law School website](#) that we're going to talk about, because I think it's actually really helpful. So, what she talks about when you're thinking about getting a job in what we could really call the normal way, where you actually have to go out and find one – you need a plan that you're going to attack this from multiple levels. And you may be doing all these at the same time, or you may be doing them sequentially, but these are kind of the things that you need to do. And we'll talk about each one of these in detail. But the first level is developing the big picture view about yourself, what you want, and what you can offer to employers that they might need. So you can imagine a Venn diagram. Here are the things I want. Here are the things that employers are looking at. Where do those things overlap? You need to have that kind of level of detail before you can make a convincing case.

Now, the second level is tactical. So what are the concrete steps that you need to do to get this job? So there may be things like networking, applying for jobs, how are you going to stay organized, all these kinds of things. And then the third level, which I think is often overlooked but is really important, is being aware of the mental and emotional toll that this process can take on you, and finding ways to proactively combat that. So, if you're going into your 3L year, you might spend the majority of that year looking for a job. And that can be really stressful. I think just noticing that and having tools to deal with it can be very helpful. Do you generally agree that this is a good way of looking at it?

Sadie Jones: Absolutely. And I think that a lot of people might just kind of do the middle step.

Alison Monahan: Right.

Sadie Jones: Which is, what do I need to do to get there? That's what I hear a lot. But I think that this is all really important, because you should take a minute to sort of figure out what are you looking for, what are the reasons, where do you fit in, what's right for you? It's not just about necessarily finding a job at any cost. Then the other thing, I think especially in the third step is, there might be a lot of rejection involved on different levels, because not hearing back from somebody is going to feel like rejection. And a lot of these resumes you're going to send out are going to get "No's". So, I think just kind of preparing yourself for



that it's going to be maybe a long process, and you're going to be hearing "No" a lot, and you have to keep going.

Alison Monahan: Right.

Sadie Jones: So I think that all this stuff is important and not just, "How many resumes do I send out?"

Alison Monahan: Yeah, I completely agree with you. I think a lot of times people skip that first step and they say, "Well, I just need a job." And the reality is you're not going to be a super convincing candidate for any job if you're willing to just say, "I'll take any job." It's like, "Well, okay. Are you qualified to be a barista after going to law school?" Just because you graduated from law school doesn't qualify you to do these very specific types of things. So, let's talk about that big picture view. What are some things people should be thinking about here when they're looking at, "I'm going to take a step back and kind of figure out what makes the most sense for me"?

Sadie Jones: Well, I think you need to look at your own strengths and what skills you have and what areas you specifically want to work in and what is going to work for you, in terms of where you are going to be successful. So, there are people who just think that BigLaw is the end-all, be-all and the pinnacle of everything. But that environment and that situation might not be right for everybody, even if you have the grades or it's something that you are able to do. I think you have to think about where you're going to be successful based on your personality, where you've done well before, where you haven't done well before, what types of people different areas are going to attract, how stressful it's going to be. Because like you said, just saying you'll take any job probably isn't going to make you successful long-term in that job. And that's what I think you should be thinking about.

Alison Monahan: I completely agree with that. I think even just within what type of work environment you are looking at. Do you want some place that's super high powered and a lot of stress and a lot of prestige, or would you be happier at a smaller place, probably with less stuff going on? Do you want to be in court, do you not want to be in court? Do you want to do different types of work? There are so many different ways you can be a lawyer that just saying, "I want a legal job" is not that helpful. I think you can say you're not sure, like, "Well, I just don't know what I want to do." You've got to really do that examination of, what classes did you like, what did you find interesting, what did you do well in? Of the jobs that you've had, what specific pieces of those jobs did you like or not like, and how can you do more of that or less of that?

When you're thinking about your strength and your skills, sometimes I feel like people can get beaten down a bit by law school and they think, "Oh, I just don't



have anything to offer to the world." If you're feeling that way and you feel like law school kind of has beaten you down, just get back to before law school, when you thought you were a successful person. What were your strengths and your skills then? You came in to law school was certain things you are good at. What are those things? Say that you are feeling beaten down by the law school experience – maybe there's a way that you can use those previous skills, whatever they are, and strengths in a legal career. So maybe you're not the strongest analytical person you've realized, but you're really good at something like project management. There may be other careers in the legal field that can be a lot better fit than just trying to beat your head against the wall to become a kind of traditional lawyer.

Sadie Jones: Absolutely. I think that this is just a crucial step. I also think law school a lot of times pushes you towards litigation. And I've seen a lot of law students come through who clearly would do better with transactional work. And that fits in, and they don't even know what it is or what's involved.

Alison Monahan: Right. No, I think that's right.

Sadie Jones: And they're scared of what's going to be involved with being a litigator. So, I think sort of being open minded and trying to figure out what different things really are. Because I think it's like just picking a law school based on the rankings, and just saying, "This is the best, so I need to go there." I think it's sort of the same thing in terms of jobs – having this idea like, "This is the best." It's not about the best in what outside people think. It's about, what is the best for you and what is going to work for you and your life? How many hours is this? How much are you going to work?

Alison Monahan: What's going to make you fulfilled going to work and let you work a reasonable amount of time? The other thing too is sometimes people forget that these things that you did or that you knew before law school can actually be a great asset to a job. So if you had a career before or you had studied different things, this is kind of the time to think about, do you want to try to combine that with your legal experience? Because then you can position yourself as a more unique applicant than somebody who doesn't have those skills.

Sadie Jones: Definitely.

Alison Monahan: Alright. So, we've done our self-analysis, we have a pretty clear idea, you can tell your story. Again, you need your elevator pitch. I think we have some posts and podcasts we can link to on this, but you need a succinct version of what are you looking for, why are you looking for it, that kind of thing. So, once you have that story and you can talk about it, it's time really I think to pull in your contacts. What do you think about this?



- Sadie Jones: Yes, I think that's definitely the place to start. And I think when you start doing that, you might realize that there are all of these people you hadn't really thought about.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah. Katie had some advice around that. She said you want to create a list of basically everybody you know, and then organize that list into separate categories based on the type of information and opportunities that you might need from them. And I think this is a really useful way of looking at it, because sometimes people get so focused in on just their legal contacts. And the world of people that you could be talking to about this job search is actually much broader. So you may have people that you want to do informational interviews with. People could be sources for jobs. People may be support and providing you with sort of an analysis of yourself. Old family friends may have ideas that you haven't thought of, that kind of thing. And then there may be people who know of opportunities. So, this is where your loose network comes into play. Your strong connections are people that you might talk about this with, and of course they're going to try to help. But inevitably their networks are limited. People actually, studies have shown, tend to find jobs through the looser network of connections, because those people have a whole separate area that they can connect you into. So I think you want to be thinking about this broadly, not just like, "What law school professor could I talk to?", because they may have 10 students coming to them asking for help, but somebody that your family knows or something may not have anybody.
- Sadie Jones: I hear a lot from students saying things like, "Oh well, my parents aren't lawyers, there are no other lawyers in my family, so I really don't have much to go on."
- Alison Monahan: Right.
- Sadie Jones: Most of the time, even if one of your parents is a lawyer, it's not necessarily going to lead to a job.
- Alison Monahan: Right.
- Sadie Jones: So, I think that you definitely need to sort of step back and look more broadly, because I bet that there are different paths to go on.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah. I have another [series on The Girl's Guide site](#) written by a friend of mine who, speaking of litigation, realized she did not actually enjoy conflict. She wanted to stop being a litigator, but she still wanted to work in a legal role. And so she took some time and she went to a career coach. She tried different things, but how she ended up actually getting the job that she got that she really liked was, someone – I think it was like her uncle or her great uncle or something – was at a dinner and started talking to somebody, and then they started chatting and he realized, "This might be a good person for my niece to



talk with." It was one of those super random things. He's not a lawyer, he doesn't know lawyers. He's just chatting it up at the dinner table, and that's how she got the job.

Sadie Jones: I think that's so important – let people know you're looking for a job, because you never know where that's going to come up down the road.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, absolutely. So, I think when you're thinking about this, you obviously can't reach out to like hundreds of people at once. It probably doesn't really make sense. You've got to make a plan, right? So, do you have any ideas about how people can approach this?

Sadie Jones: Well, I think that there are lots of ways to start with your networking. I think that starting with LinkedIn is a great way. So you can kind of see, directly showing people's jobs, where your network goes. And I think you definitely need to keep track of it in, as we've talked about before, a spreadsheet, a Trello board, whatever form you do it in. You need to make sure that you're sort of keeping track of where you knew these different people and who you've reached out to. So LinkedIn I guess is the more, starting with career. But then also we'll have personal contacts and things like that.

Alison Monahan: Right. Yeah, I think the keeping track piece is so important. I mean, it doesn't do you a whole lot of good to reach out to all these people and then drop the ball.

Sadie Jones: That's another reason not to start too broadly – to make sure you can really start crossing people off and making plans and things like that.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, because it's almost like online dating. If you go on like five different dating sites at once and then suddenly you've got like 100 messages and you can't keep track of them, that's probably not the best way to do this. You maybe want to start with like one option. Reach out to 10 people, and then maybe a few of those agree to chat with you or have other ideas for you or whatever it is. And anytime someone is willing to talk with you, always ask them that last question of, "Is there anyone else you think I should talk to about this?", because that will get you a lot of great new suggestions. But then you've got to actually follow up. There is almost nothing worse than somebody giving you that connection and then you just drop the ball on it. It makes you look really, really bad. So, you want to be sure that you're actually very appreciative and following up with people.

Sadie Jones: Because that person will never help you again.

Alison Monahan: Right. Exactly. If you want people to help you, you need to follow up on their suggestions, and then ideally you need to circle back with them with appreciation and let them know that you actually did something with it.



- Sadie Jones: Yes. Yeah, you should close the loop and make sure that they know.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah. And it doesn't have to be anything huge. It could just be like, "Hey, Alison, that was really great that you were able to connect me with your friend Sadie. I had a conversation with her and she was super helpful. And I just wanted to let you know that I really appreciate that." Because then I'm going to be like, "Oh, great." And maybe we even talk about you in favorable ways behind your back and think of other ways we can help you. That kind of thing.
- Sadie Jones: Yeah. And also with the follow-up, I think once you've met with somebody, let's say that they gave you some suggestions or said on their side, "Oh, I'll get back to you about X, Y or Z", and they don't. It's totally fine to follow up and say to them, "Oh, it was..." Obviously you're going to thank them. And then, "You had mentioned X. Do you have any suggestions?", or whatever. That's fine.
- Alison Monahan: Right.
- Sadie Jones: People forget.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah. I think sometimes people from the student side feel like either they're being annoying, or they take it personally that they've been neglected because somebody hasn't followed up with them. But the reality is just, people are busy, things fall through the cracks. And reaching out politely just to say, "Hey, I know that we talked about meeting for coffee and we haven't been able to set up a time. These are the times I'd be free this week. Do any of these work for you?", is enough to get you back on that radar.
- Sadie Jones: Definitely. And there is a point where if someone's really not getting back to you, you don't want to be annoying. Maybe you let that one go and you move on to your next connection. But I think it's fine to follow up once or twice.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah, absolutely. Alright. Some more advice that we had in this series I think is actually really useful, is considering a tiered approach. And you could use this in terms of actual job applications you're submitting, or I think you can use it for your networking. You can think of it by what you want to try first – so, based on what really excites you or what would be the ideal job or the ideal person to speak with. And then your second tier is kind of what comes next. Okay, those didn't really work out. What are some other fields or jobs or people I'd like to talk with that I would be interested in? Maybe not quite as excited about, but I'm still pretty psyched about. And then you get to that bottom level, which is, what is not going to make you totally miserable and what is your last ditch effort going to be? We sometimes talk to people who really are in this scenario and it can be hard, because they've done a lot of work, they haven't really gotten results, the end of the year is approaching. Or maybe they've sat for the bar and they're waiting for their bar results, and they're really kind of desperate. That's



not a great place to be, but it's also not the end of the world. I think you have to think of this first job really as a stepping stone, right?

Sadie Jones: Mm-hmm. And I think that there is a point where you're at the end and you just need to find a job.

Alison Monahan: Right. Something to do.

Sadie Jones: We've specifically talked about this at different points. So, if you're a 1L or a 2L or a 3L, it's different what that is and what you're really looking for. But there is a point in all of these places where you just need to find a job, any job. I think, like you said, it can be really hard psychologically to be there. And you're also trying not to put out that desperation to employers, even if it's what you feel. So it is hard to kind of balance those two things. But absolutely, it's your first job. Once you get past that, it's going to be easier to get the next one, because you're going to have experience and you're going to do the best you can in it.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, absolutely. I think of a friend of mine who's incredibly smart and talented, but for various reasons had gone to a law school that wasn't that prestigious and wasn't in the area she wanted to work physically. And she was kind of banging her head against this wall, because she had very specific types of work she wanted to do in this specific area. But she eventually had to take a job that was kind of adjacent, just to have something to do. But over the course of a couple of years, basically worked her way into this job that she really wanted, because she was patient enough to keep applying for it, basically. And was then ultimately very successful there. So it's not that she didn't have the ability to be successful; it's just that she had this set of circumstances that were for obvious reasons making it harder for her to get what she wanted. But she kept plowing away at it and she got it.

Sadie Jones: Yeah, I think that's where it's like, what do you really want? If that's really where you want to get to, there are probably ways to get there. It just may not be the straightest path. And it's like if you're at a lower ranked school, it may be hard to get into a big firm if that's what you want to do. But there are lots of ways to do it down the road. It's just usually hard at the beginning. So once you have experience, there is a way to get there maybe.

Alison Monahan: Yeah. And I think people who say, "Well, it's just not fair that I'm not getting these opportunities" – that's probably true. But what that means is, you have to really be the one out, busting your butt and making sure that you're taking advantage of every opportunity to make yourself stand out and learn something. Eventually, if you start showing up in court, for example, and other people start to say, "Hey, who's that kid? He seems really smart. We should talk to him." And you're hustling. Everybody basically wants to employ someone like that. They just may not know about you immediately.



- Sadie Jones: Absolutely. I think it's just about maybe you have to work a little harder.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah, which is frankly not the end of the world, but it can be frustrating. So, let's talk about that. If you're in the middle of an extended search for a job or maybe you found something but it's really not something that you're that thrilled about – do you have any tips for mental and emotional well-being in that state?
- Sadie Jones: Well, I think some of it is probably taking a step back from it sometimes, and being around people who are not in law school, are not lawyers, are not part of this. And remembering that there's a world outside of there. I think that's actually a good thing.
- Alison Monahan: And that actually you're in a pretty privileged position if you've graduated from law school and you've passed the bar exam, because the worst case scenario really in that scenario is, you can always start your own practice.
- Sadie Jones: Yes. You have options. You have skills. I think that it can be really easy to get stuck inside your own specific situation on that day.
- Alison Monahan: Sometimes you're getting outside pressure from your family or whatever, like, "I don't understand. You went to law school, we spent all this money. Why do you not have a highly paid job?" And that can be really hard for people.
- Sadie Jones: Definitely. And I also think it can be hard just comparing yourself to other people. We're talking about you're looking for things outside OCI and you have a lot of friends who are just doing OCI and you think it seems so easy for them. First of all, it probably isn't super easy for them either; none of this is easy for anyone. But also, you kind of need to focus on yourself, stay in her own lane – what you're doing, what your plan is – and not compare yourself to what everybody else is doing, because you're not in their situation.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah. And I think the reality is, even though it can seem difficult having to do a lot of this introspective work and having to really go out and find something, actually can pay off in the end, because you're likely to end up in something that is a better fit for you. And the reality is, you can look at the statistics – most people who start as summer associates, they got a job at OCI, they summer at a firm, they take the offer – they are gone from that firm in three to five years. So, it's not like they've solved their long-term problem anyway. And frankly, they were probably kind of miserable for a lot of that time. So it's possible that you might actually find something that's a better fit over the long term and that makes you more likely to stay in the profession and have a satisfying career, than if someone had just handed you one of these jobs to start with.



- Sadie Jones: Absolutely. I think you're learning things and developing skills just through this process. So I think just handling rejection and learning to network and putting yourself out there – those are all going to be great for you long term.
- Alison Monahan: These are good life skills. So, if you're feeling sad and feeling sorry for yourself, just think, "Hey, I'm learning some life skills." I mean, easier said than done. I do think perspective can be really useful. I think you have to get very practical about this too. Make sure that you are taking care of yourself, that you're sleeping adequately, that you're eating adequately, that you're exercising adequately, that you're taking enough time off. It can be very challenging to think, "Oh, I'm going to go watch a movie for two hours" when you're thinking, "I have to find a job, I have to find a job." But that's really a marathon. It's not a sprint. You don't need to be doing like 10 hours a day of this every day. Doing something, even if it's three or four days a week, carving out 30 minutes or an hour and doing it consistently, is going to pay off more than panicking, trying to do a bunch of stuff at once, getting burned out, getting frustrated, dropping the ball. This is something you need to be doing fairly consistently, and I think it's going to be a lot easier to deal with.
- Sadie Jones: Definitely.
- Alison Monahan: And also coaching. I mean, there are career coaches. We can help you with this if you do feel like you've hit a dead end and you're just not getting results – you're sending out your resume, you're getting nothing back, you're going on interviews, you're not getting offers, whatever. People have different issues here. There may be different challenges you're facing. So, at some point I think getting some outside help, whether it's your law school career services who may have some resources, private career coaches, even just interviewing with friends – you've got to have other people's feedback, because you may not understand how you're coming across in a way that is preventing you from getting what you want.
- Sadie Jones: Because I think there is a job out there that you're going to get if you keep at it and work on these things.
- Alison Monahan: The reality is, very few people who graduate from law school and pass the bar, ultimately do not end up finding something that they can do in the legal profession or outside of it. You're typically not going to be totally unemployed. That just doesn't really happen.
- Sadie Jones: Correct.
- Alison Monahan: Alright. Well, we're running out of time here. Any final thoughts on this?



- Sadie Jones: My final thought is really kind of what we were talking about, staying organized and giving yourself tasks to do. Because I think people get kind of down about it and maybe you feel like you've gotten a lot of "No's". And I think having things on your list that you know you can actively do is going to make you feel like you're accomplishing something towards your goal. And then having that always running, so you feel like, "Okay, I crossed some things off the list. I did some things today." Because there's always more. And I think there's always going to be a time where you might feel like you've hit the end of the road, but there really is no end of the road. You can always do more. You can always network more. You can always send out more resumes. So, I think it's important to kind of stick with it.
- Alison Monahan: I think that's right. You can give yourself very specific goals and they don't have to be super challenging. It could be, "I'm going to reach out to five people on LinkedIn through my alumni network", or whatever it is, and just send them a connection or a first request for like, "Hey, I exist." Or not necessarily LinkedIn, but whatever. I have a [guide on The Girl's Guide to doing informational interviews](#). So you might commit to setting up one informational interview a week. I mean, that doesn't sound that hard, does it? One a week. You can do that. But that would mean huge progress. If you actually did that every week for a few months, you would be talking to so many people that could actually move you towards that goal.
- Sadie Jones: Yeah. I think that there are little things you can do all the time to get yourself where you want to go.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah, and focus on what you can do – I think that's a great point – versus results. You can't control whether somebody wants to do an interview with you, but you can control how many resumes you send out. So, the more the things are under your control on an ongoing basis, I think the better you're going to feel about the process, and also, the more progress you're going to make. Well, with that unfortunately, we are out of time. Thanks so much for joining us.
- Sadie Jones: Thanks for having me.
- Alison Monahan: My pleasure. For more career help and the opportunity to work one-on-one with us, you can check out [CareerDicta.com](#). If you enjoyed this episode of the Law School Toolbox podcast, please take a second to leave a review and rating on your favorite listening app, because we would really appreciate it. And be sure to subscribe so you don't miss anything. If you have any questions or comments, please don't hesitate to reach out to Lee or Alison at [lee@lawschooltoolbox.com](mailto:lee@lawschooltoolbox.com) or [alison@lawschooltoolbox.com](mailto:alison@lawschooltoolbox.com). Or you can always contact us via our website [contact form](#) at LawSchoolToolbox.com. Thanks for listening, we'll talk soon! And good luck with your job search!



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