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What's To Become Of The Legal Profession?



Synopsis

"What's to Become of the Legal Profession?" is about the future of the practice of law in the United States. Over the last twenty years many legal consultants and academics have predicted significant disruptive changes in the way our legal system operates and in the prospects of lawyers. Trotter explains why many of these changes have not occurred and provides his own view of what the future holds for the legal profession. In the process he reviews the significant changes that has taken place in the practice of law since the end of World War II, describes their effect on the practice of law today, and explains why the challenges now facing the legal profession are no more intimidating than the issues it has successfully addressed over the last 70+ years.

Book Information

Paperback: 162 pages

Publisher: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform; First edition (February 28, 2017)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1534903690

ISBN-13: 978-1534903692

Product Dimensions: 6 x 0.4 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 10.7 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 5.0 out of 5 stars 4 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #1,424,342 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #77 in Books > Law > Law Practice > Legal Services

Customer Reviews

"This compact book summarizes the changes that have taken place in the practice of law over the past 70 years and what the author expects to happen in the future. His mood is optimism anchored by realism--there will be a role for lawyers in the future, even though the way that they practice is likely to change. . . . In opposition to professor and author Richard Susskind, Trotter reminds the reader that legal services are not just information services: "The core of legal service is the amalgamation of factual and legal information, analysis, advice and action." Donald P. Boyle, Jr. October 2017 edition of the Georgia Bar Journal "Trotter is no gloom-and-doom prophet: he stresses the resiliency of his profession. Despite dire predictions that online resources or the flood of new lawyers would undermine it, Trotter does not expect the legal profession in the United States to change beyond recognition in the foreseeable future." Summer

2017 edition of "Colloquy" magazine, Harvard University, Graduate School of Arts & Sciences

Michael Trotter is the author of three important books about the past, present and future of the legal profession in the United States: "Profit and the Practice of Law" (Univ. of Georgia Press 1997, reissue CreateSpace 2012), "Declining Prospects" (CreateSpace 2012), and "What's to Become of the Legal Profession?" (CreateSpace 2017). As an equity partner in two of the largest and most successful law firms in the United States (the predecessors of Alston & Bird and of Kilpatrick Townsend & Stockton) and in three entrepreneurial law firms (Trotter, Bondurant, Griffin, Miller & Hishon; Trotter, Smith & Jacobs; and Taylor English Duma LLP) Mr. Trotter has been a keen student of the economics and ethos of modern law practice. He has written and spoken frequently on law firm management, operations and economics and has authored many articles and columns on law firm management and related issues in various publications including "The National Law Journal," "Managing Partner," "Law Practice," "The Daily Report" and "The Journal of Southern Legal History." He served as Chairman of the Law Firm Finance Committee of the Law Practice Division of the American Bar Association in the 2015-16 year, and continues to serve as a member of the committee. His courses in law firm management and economics at the Emory University Law School in the early 1990s may have been the first, and were certainly among the first, to be taught at a major American law school. He currently serves as an Adjunct Professor at Emory where he is teaching courses in "The Evolution of the Practice of Law and of Law Practice Economics," and in "The Future of the Legal Profession."

Michael Trotter comes at the legal profession (as an earlier reviewer implied) as someone who started practicing in 1960, and can deliver a truly long-range perspective on what has changed and what has not during that lengthy career. Trotter is not an alarmist about the future of demand for legal services nor, specifically, for that subset of the market provided by law firms pretty much as we know them. My own most just-released book, Tomorrowland, presents my own set of scenarios on how this might all play out, so I would like to think I'm in a position to have a view on all of this. Trotter is deeply sympathetic to the highest and best values and traditions of the profession, which is an admirable quality in and of itself. For an extended perspective from one practitioner who clearly loves what he does, you could do no better.

The end of the "End of Lawyers"

"What's to Become of the Legal Profession?" is the

third book in what I think of as the Trotter trilogy; methodically debunks Susskind's theories about the end of the legal business. He is the best commentator and prognosticator on the legal profession and its future in my opinion. He's a Harvard trained lawyer who has practiced "big law" for 55 years. Enough said.

For over 40 years I have observed and admired Michael Trotter in his roles as partner in prominent law firms, as founder and leader of entrepreneurial firms and in more recent years as thoughtful analyst and wise commentator on the legal profession. I know of no one better qualified to advise on the state and future of our profession, and I believe *What's to Become of the Legal Profession?* is his most important work. It provides a good summary of the current status of our profession, and it thoughtfully refutes the pessimism of those who noisily express concerns that technology will largely eliminate the need for lawyers. If you know a young person considering a career in law or starting out in practice, give him or her a copy. It will provide a wonderful introduction to the current practice of law and, more importantly, it will shine a bright light on the road ahead.

For those of us in or associated with the legal profession, Trotter offers a wide-ranging commentary starting with the aftermath of World War II. The lesson is the changes in the profession since that time have been accommodated and the constant nature of change is to be expected. But no stone is left unturned as the book delves into the shortcomings of current law school curricula, structural changes in the UK as well as bravely addressing the well-publicized predictions of Richard Susskind. Trotter's encyclopedic perspective creates a real page-turner.

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