

Why Ask Q promotes **a zigzagging career path.**

Ask Q's entrepreneur in residence,
Dieter Honoré explains.



A new generation of lawyers wants to break free. Climbing the traditional career ladder in a law firm or legal department doesn't work for them. They prefer zigging and zagging across different industries, specializations and competencies. Ask Q embraces the zigzag career path. Our consultants are non-monogamous legal consultants working for several companies in different industries at the same time, says Dieter.



The traditional career ladder explained

For most lawyers, the traditional career is linear in shape. You have a set period in which you have to achieve a certain rank or level of progression within the law firm. Some firms are pretty transparent about that 'up or out' policy, while others adopt the same approach but would rather not talk about it.

That classical law firm career is also characterized by an increasing degree of specialization. Most law firms organize themselves horizontally as a set of practice groups and legal specializations such as Banking, Corporate, or IP/IT. Consequently, lawyers have grown into hyper specialists and clients expressly turn to them because they are looking for lawyers with a specific legal expertise or an in-depth knowledge of a particular sector.

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A new generation of lawyers wants to break free

This classical career path doesn't work for an increasing number of lawyers. They don't like the comfort zone and believe that outside is where the magic happens. In other words, they don't want to become one of those hyper specialists who knows all about one specific dot in the legal field. They prefer to become someone who can connect the dots rather than being a one-dot expert.

They don't have a problem with a career ladder as such. They show ambition and love the idea of climbing a ladder, but they simply don't like the fact that the ladder is put against the same (law firm) wall each day. Instead, they'd rather move it and put it against another wall every once and a while.

These are therefore the typical reasons why an increasing number of legal people are opting to pursue a zigzag career path. In the past, zigging and zagging in this way meant changing employers regularly or starting as a freelance legal interim manager. Until now, that is. Ask Q is a company that allows you to zigzag within the same company.



The benefits of a zigzagging career

When listening to people who chose a zigzagging career, you often hear the same arguments. It makes them feel alive. Exploring new opportunities helped them find the (sometimes surprising) sweet spot in their careers or competencies. It even made them discover skills and competencies they hadn't thought of before.

Zigzagging also enhances problem-solving skills. Combining knowledge from different employers, often in different sectors and segments, allows you to have a much broader view, to observe the situation from different angles and to come up with innovative solutions that some others didn't think of because they were blinded by tunnel vision.

Last but not least, both human and digital skills are rapidly becoming more important than legal skills for legal professionals. Clients demand their legal advisors to be able and willing to cooperate in and communicate with multidisciplinary teams. They turn to their trusted legal partner because they know the 'best market practice', can read the room before starting a negotiation and show empathy for the client's business and decisions.

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Ask Q takes a different approach

Ask Q was founded in early 2021 and is rapidly becoming a game changer in the legal field. For clients, Ask Q operates as a true extension of in-house legal teams. Consultants at Ask Q do not stand at the sidelines but are part of the client's team, closely relate to the business and sometimes work on-site.

There is more. This Ask Q business model opens up new and innovative career opportunities, specifically for legal professionals who wonder whether a zigzagging career might be something for them.

Each Ask Q consultant is a non-monogamous legal professional working for two or more companies at the same time. Multinationals, but also scale-ups turn to Ask Q to outsource part or all of their legal work. What this means is that the Ask Q consultants have the opportunity to constantly zigzag from one client, sector and company culture to another, while staying close to each of the clients and feeling part of their team.



Zigzagging at Ask Q put into practice

Ask Q's zigzagging model is not limited to legal domains. As a start-up looking far beyond legal expertise, Ask Q encourages new consultants to explore their talent and make room for personal growth. One of the Ask Q consultants is responsible for all social media. Another consultant turned out to be a true entrepreneur and started setting up the GDPR Expert Lab only a few months after he joined Ask Q.

Ask Q's learning and development policy reflects the same zigzagging company culture. Like other legal service providers, know-how meetings and legal training are provided. On top of this, Ask Q consultants are trained in giving 3-minute pitches, negotiation skills and project management.

From the beginning of the recruitment phase, we ask our candidates whether they aspire to a zigzag career. Part of the interview takes place during a long walk in nature, having the opportunity to meet at least five team members. During intense conversations, a business case and a telephone role-play, we get to know the candidate and see if there is a fit with the zigzag philosophy.

These are just a few examples of how Ask Q puts zigzagging into practice.

Are you curious to find out if zigzagging could work for your legal career?

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