

With Acumen and Foresight By Charlene Camilleri Zarb

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The late Professor Guido de Marco recounts in his opening chapter to his autobiography 'The Politics of Persuasion', being asked by Nerik Mizzi the number of students following the law course. He answered succinctly "About twenty" but the late Nerik Mizzi who was hard of hearing understood "A hundred and twenty". Mizzi exclaimed: "Figlio mio, morirai di fame, morirai di fame." Sixty years later the yearly number of applicants for the law course has indeed gone out of proportion for the local market. Allora moriranno di fame?

Se alcuni o tutti moriranno di fame depends on our ability to understand the market and adapt to the change within it. We are no longer operating in a closed market of a potential maximum of 350,000 inhabitants. Lawyers are now free to establish themselves in other markets and offer varied services. In old times being a lawyer meant getting into litigation, but nowadays very few lawyers opt for specialising in this area because many feel that attending court sittings is too time consuming and less financially rewarding than operating in the new niches. New lawyers are setting their foresight elsewhere reaching towards barely untapped sectors such that of the Information Technology legal business and the Gaming industry.

Law firms are still after the top notch legal minds, and are demanding for a Masters qualification besides the ordinary Doctorate in Law postgraduate degree. The Law Faculty has launched these past years the Financial Services Masters and the European and Comparative Law Masters with a degree of success. However new niches such as the IT

business has still remained unaddressed by the current postgraduate masters available locally. The benestante students are understandably enrolling in foreign universities that offer a more varied selection of Masters degrees.

Further learning has thus become a necessity rather than a commodity. Law students have to explore new niches to ensure a proliferation of future income. An incessant question that delves into the minds of industrious students along the six year long course is 'In which area of the law shall I specialise to optimise my chances of employment?' Success comes when preparation meets opportunity. As Finnis well states we should aim towards having a coherent plan in life.

The central idea of planning is of a matching between a student's capabilities and the demands of the market. Let us imagine that a student has finished one's Doctorate in law course and has decided to set oneself up in the legal business. The first thing that the student has to do is, to decide what one can actually do. One's actual knowledge and skills restricts one very severely to certain obvious areas. The lesson simply is that all students have a unique set of capabilities in the form of resources and skills and are not necessarily capable of taking advantage of all market opportunities as effectively, hence as competitively as other students. One may be a silver-tongue born orator and could do wonders in a court scenario, others are technology geeks and can make it big in the IT sector, others are business minded and find the financial sector most appealing. To summarise, the matching process between a student's capabilities and the demands of the market is fundamental to individual success. That is how one can follow the right Masters programme fruitfully and ensure that egli non muioa di fame.