

From the lecture hall to the boardroom: “Think Ahead! Practice at Filip & Company!” — the summer programme that offers students a multidisciplinary, paid experience with real projects, mentoring, and rigorous evaluation | A conversation with Cristina Tudoran (Partner) and Alexandra Țugui (HR Specialist) about how students interested in business law can gain authentic, hands-on experience inside a top firm



The “Think Ahead! Practice at Filip & Company!” programme brings law students into the heart of business law every summer through two consecutive six-week sessions. The internship is paid, based on an individual contract, and offers access to real advisory and litigation projects, meetings with practice teams, and informal events that facilitate integration. Selection is rigorous and seeks a balance between academic results, extracurricular involvement, and alignment with the firm’s values. Interest remains consistently high: over 60 applications each year, with editions that have taken in 25 students, most of them in their third year. Evaluation is both continuous and final, structured around the firm’s five values — common sense, relationship, creativity, vitality, and effectiveness. The impact is borne out in recruitment: in recent years, more than half of the programme’s participants have subsequently joined Filip & Company as trainee lawyers. The programme is continually evolving, with plans to integrate AI elements early on to ensure a relevant and innovative experience.

Paid internship, two sessions each summer: direct access to real projects and leading teams

Every year, Filip & Company runs internships for students who want to discover business law from the inside of a top-tier firm. The “Think Ahead! Practice at Filip & Company!” programme has become a tradition, offering selected students the opportunity to take a genuine first step into business law. “Each internship session lasts six weeks, and every summer we run two consecutive sessions: July–August and August–September,” explains **Alexandra Țugui**, the firm’s HR specialist.

Education and a focus on young talent are clear priorities for Filip & Company. “The purpose of the programme is to facilitate access for students interested in business law to an authentic practical experience within a leading law firm,” emphasises *Partner* **Cristina Tudoran**. Students selected for the programme work — under the supervision of the firm’s lawyers — on real, ongoing advisory and litigation matters and explore various relevant practice areas. At the end of the internship, the top participants may receive offers for long-term collaboration after graduating and being admitted to the legal profession (Bar).

Another differentiator — not always found in similar programmes — is that the internship is paid. “The programme includes remuneration and is carried out under an individual contract signed with each participant,” adds **Alexandra Țugui**. This approach, she notes, “reflects our commitment to equal opportunities and to motivating students who are genuinely interested.” The internship is therefore not merely a learning experience but one that respects students’ status and the effort they invest.

The programme is designed to give students a comprehensive view of business law. “Think Ahead! Practice at

Filip & Company! offers a multidisciplinary experience without rigid allocation to departments or specialisations,” says **Alexandra Țugui**. In this framework, each participant can attend professional meetings across all departments as well as informal events dedicated to them. “Students are encouraged to explore different practice areas to shape a clear view of a potential legal career and to assess how well it aligns with our team’s vision and values,” she adds.

Clear selection criteria: academic performance, involvement, and alignment with the firm’s values

The selection process for “*Think Ahead! Practice at Filip & Company!*” is rigorous yet open and adapted to the diversity of student profiles. “The programme is aimed primarily at third-year students, but we also have sections open to second-year students,” explains **Cristina Tudoran**, *Partner at Filip & Company*. Recruitment is coordinated by an experienced team representing all of the firm’s practice areas, assessing both technical ability and aspects of personality, behaviour, and values.

Strong emphasis is placed on results and engagement. “We look carefully at academic performance and extracurricular involvement — projects, competitions, volunteering, or other relevant initiatives,” adds **Cristina Tudoran**. The ideal candidate profile reflects “a balance between academic performance and active engagement beyond coursework, alongside personal traits that support integration into the team and a valuable contribution to it.”

Beyond grades and CVs, organisational culture matters. “Compatibility with the firm’s values is a criterion we closely monitor,” stresses **Cristina Tudoran**. She highlights the importance of a proactive attitude, team spirit, and interpersonal skills: “openness, curiosity, and flexibility facilitate easier integration into a working environment where professionalism and the quality of deliverables are essential.”

Year after year, the programme draws considerable interest. “The number of applications varies, but we receive over 60 every year,” notes HR specialist **Alexandra Țugui**. There is no fixed number of places; the firm adapts to the students’ profiles and motivation. “If we identify more suitable candidates, we expand the number of places. For instance, this year we had a total of 25 students in the programme, 18 of whom were third-years,” she explains. Most come from the University of Bucharest Faculty of Law, but the list also includes young people from Cluj, Iași, Timișoara, and even universities abroad.

Selection unfolds in several clear stages. “The process has three essential stages: application review — CV, cover letter, academic track — the technical interview — applied discussions on legal cases, evaluation of critical thinking and ability to connect legal institutions — and the fit interview — exploring motivation, personal values, and career objectives,” says **Alexandra Țugui**. Thus, the programme tests legal competence and critical thinking as well as motivation, values, and personal goals.

In the end, motivation often makes the difference. “Personal motivation is an essential criterion in the selection process,” underlines **Cristina Tudoran**. She notes that there are students with exceptional academic performance but without a clear motivation, which makes integration into Filip & Company and business law more difficult. “The field is dynamic and demanding, and individual determination and intrinsic motivation are decisive for progress in this career,” the Partner concludes.

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Research, drafting, court, training & onboarding: the practical path of an intern

One of the programme's strengths is the diversity of activities available to students. "The activities in our programme are varied and mirror the reality of the legal profession as faithfully as possible; they are adjusted annually, taking into account feedback from participants in previous sessions," says **Cristina Tudoran**.

Legal research is naturally a central element, essential for any budding lawyer. In addition, the interns have the opportunity to draft documents and analyses in real cases, prepare files or statements of defence, and attend professional meetings. "When possible, students can sit in on court hearings or even client meetings and conferences," notes **Cristina Tudoran**. The programme also includes informal social moments designed to support integration into the team and understanding of the organisational culture.

The start is carefully structured. "To give them a solid foundation, the internship begins with a period of trainings/onboarding during which we build together the knowledge base and skills needed for day-to-day work," adds the Filip & Company partner. This initial stage helps students get up to speed and understand the programme's expectations.

Openness to multiple practice areas remains a priority. "Students are not assigned to fixed departments; they have the freedom to collaborate with different teams according to their professional interests," explains HR specialist **Alexandra Țugui**. This framework is complemented by dedicated trainings to support everyday activities and to facilitate understanding of various practice areas.

Mentor and senior-lawyer involvement is constant. "The entire Filip & Company team actively contributes to integrating and training students during the internship, including partners and senior lawyers," says **Alexandra Țugui**. Interns receive concrete assignments, guidance, and feedback, and being seated in offices alongside their mentors enables direct collaboration with professionals at all seniority levels, including partners.

Assessment is rigorous and transparent. "At the end of the internship, students complete a self-assessment form, and mentors and designated colleagues provide feedback through a dedicated form," explains **Cristina Tudoran**. The evaluation tools are built around the firm's five core values: common sense, relationship, creativity, vitality, and effectiveness. The assessment tracks individual progress, adaptability, and other relevant aspects. Objectives are set by the mentor from the first week, and the form remains accessible throughout the internship for periodic updates. During the programme, participants also receive ratings related to specific activities, which are consolidated into a final score.

The programme's impact is reflected in students' reactions. "The most memorable are those where students tell us the six weeks went by too quickly, that they gained direct, first-hand understanding of a lawyer's role, that they would have liked to stay longer, and that they were impressed by the authenticity of the experience through their direct involvement in real projects," says **Cristina Tudoran**. Many discover not just mentors but "colleagues and friends" within the Filip & Company team — a testament to the experience's value.

From internship to career: half of participants become trainee lawyers

Filip & Company's summer programme is more than a learning experience for students; it is also a cornerstone of

the firm's HR strategy. "*Think Ahead! Practice at Filip & Company!*" is an essential pillar in our strategy for recruiting and training the next generations of lawyers," stresses Partner **Cristina Tudoran**. A significant proportion of the team started as interns: "many of our current colleagues took part in our internships as students and joined us immediately after completing their studies and being admitted to the profession."

The results confirm the real impact of this approach. "In recent years, more than half of the participants in our summer programme have subsequently become trainee lawyers at Filip & Company," explains HR specialist **Alexandra Țugui**. This integration rate shows that the internship is not just a gateway but a decisive stage in young lawyers' professional path.

The difference between those who stay and those who choose other paths primarily comes down to values and motivation. "Students who stand out and later become colleagues naturally align with the firm's values and show a genuine and sustained interest in the practice of law," says **Cristina Tudoran**. She also highlights other defining qualities: "openness, flexibility, adaptability and depth, strong communication and advocacy skills, and a dual capacity — on the one hand, to take ownership and deliver autonomously and, on the other, to work effectively in a team."

Even for those who do not join immediately, the connection remains. "We keep in touch with participants and, depending on each person's profile, interests, and aspirations, we reach out when relevant collaboration opportunities arise," adds **Alexandra Țugui**. This is supported either through former mentors or directly by the HR department.

Thus, "*Think Ahead! Practice at Filip & Company!*" proves its value not only over the summer but in the long term as well: it strengthens the current team, shapes future business lawyers, and builds a network of young professionals connected to the firm's values and culture.

Reflections and outlook: how the programme is evolving and what it means for future generations of lawyers

Filip & Company's summer programme is in constant evolution, adapting to the expectations of new student generations and to changes in the legal market. "*Think Ahead! Practice at Filip & Company!*" has been continuously refined year after year based on feedback from participants and from all colleagues involved," says HR specialist **Alexandra Țugui**. While the current format is effective, there is an ongoing drive for improvement: "we adapt continuously to meet the programme's objectives and respond to the needs of today's generations, providing an experience that exceeds expectations."

A natural step towards the future is the integration of technology. "We are exploring early integration of AI components into internship activities to provide the most relevant and innovative experience, as well as a real-time test of adaptability," notes **Alexandra Țugui**. In this way, participants are exposed not only to the practice of business law but also to the technological transformations already reshaping the profession.

Authenticity as a hallmark of the internship experience

"Every law firm adapts its internship programme to its own values and dynamics," says Partner **Cristina Tudoran**. At Filip & Company, the differentiator lies in being people-centred and open to active involvement. "Mentoring and the possibility of being and working in direct contact with team members, openness to contributions from student-colleagues, and the opportunity we offer them to understand and leave their mark on ongoing projects

ensure the authenticity of each student's experience within our organisation," she explains.

More than just a programme, the internship is viewed as a labour of love for the firm. "It is a project close to the heart of the Filip & Company team — in one way or another, every member of our team contributes generously to this programme and to helping someone at the start of their journey make a well-informed, well-prepared career choice," adds **Cristina Tudoran**.

The message to students is equally strong. "In the short term, an internship at Filip & Company is a great opportunity for growth, for broadening horizons, and for connecting with outstanding professionals," says **Cristina Tudoran**. She also highlights the deeper dimension: "the very name of our programme — *Think Ahead! Practice at Filip & Company!* — contains an important message we develop here: choosing a profession is perhaps the first major conscious choice on the threshold of adult life. As far as becoming a lawyer is concerned, our internship combines relevant knowledge and information with authentic experiences, trials, and opportunities we consider irreplaceable in that choice."

Looking more broadly at legal education, the partner sees strengths but also room for improvement. "Law faculties provide a solid theoretical foundation. At the same time, integrating practical activities that simulate specific tasks across legal professions would add significant value," explains **Cristina Tudoran**. Applied exercises can make the difference: "through practical exercises, students can better understand how legal concepts translate into professional reality and be better prepared for the challenges of practice."

She points to three concrete directions. First, "exercises in analysing legal issues and drafting documents based on real-life scenarios, rather than classic school-type hypotheticals — including workshops dedicated to writing legal analyses, contracts, or procedural documents, so that students develop clear and rigorous drafting techniques and a style adapted to each document type." Second, "clarifying the roles and responsibilities across legal professions — introducing practical modules that explain the differences among the roles of lawyer, magistrate, notary, or in-house counsel, and the shared responsibility such roles carry in supporting society and justice." Third, "developing communication, advocacy, and debate skills — organising moot pleadings, thematic debates, or mock-trial competitions to cultivate clarity of expression, the power of argument, and the ability to listen and respond with tact and professionalism. Similar results could also be achieved by re-popularising oral examinations in law schools from the very first year."

"Such additions are meant to bridge theory and professional reality, which in our view would help produce graduates who are better prepared and have a practical outlook capable of adding value to the legal profession," concludes **Cristina Tudoran**.

Overall, "*Think Ahead! Practice at Filip & Company!*" is not just an intense summer experience; it is a bridge between academic training and a professional career. Its ongoing evolution, openness to innovation, and emphasis on mentoring turn it into a vehicle through which young people discover what business law truly means in practice.