



ATTORNEY SEARCH

*The Standard in Attorney  
Search and Placement*

## *Article of the Week from Harrison Barnes*

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### ***How to Beat the System and Stop Being a Profit-Driven Workaholic Attorney***

**Summary:** Learn how to enjoy your career as an attorney and achieve long-term career success in your legal career.

Very few attorneys understand why they join profit-driven workaholic cults and why there is so much pressure to be part of them. The most popular articles on most legal job sites involve the profits per partner that attorneys can make, or [the salaries they can make](#) when they get out of law school. Other websites gain attention by writing about how horrible it is practicing law and about well-known attorneys who fall off their perches.

This article offers you insights on a different way to think about your legal career and the practice of law that will make you not only a financially-successful attorney but also a happy and fulfilled person. The key is to stop being reactive to a capitalistic, drone-like legal world that treats you as a commodity and start being proactive by re-imagining yourself as an energetic, intellectually-curious, problem-solving entrepreneur.

Attorneys go into law firms presumably to achieve their dreams. The pursuit of the dream requires a long workday, incredible energy, cutthroat competition, little sleep and ignoring your family. Most successful male attorneys I know have been married at least once. For most attorneys, there is not a moment to lose if they hope to achieve the dream.

What is the dream anyway? In most cases, attorneys never reach the dream. Many who do are so fat, tired and strung out on substances by the time they do they forgot what they were doing anyway. They have become angry, cynical, unpleasant and workaholic drones that bark orders at subordinates, look bad and emerge from their cars late at night to visit families that often dislike them despite all of the advantages of being part of the system they have been provided.



- **See [25 Reasons Most Attorneys Hate the Practice of Law and Go Crazy \(and What to Do About it\)](#) for more information.**

Most of this involves a crazed fascination and drive for material things. Attorneys feel they need to live in certain neighborhoods, drive certain cars and send their kids to expensive schools so they too can grow up and qualify to join the treadmill. Attorneys who slow down and get off this system—whether it is [going in-house](#), starting a solo practice, or doing something else completely—are branded “heretics” by the legal establishment and large law firms and ostracized for life. Attorneys who stay on this system continually see the ball (of partnership, equity partnership and a larger paycheck) pushed farther and farther away. Because we are in a society dominated by a drive towards material things, money is required for this at all times (more of it) and this requires more and more work.

Whether it is New York, Los Angeles, or Detroit, attorneys are continuously surrounded and bombarded by what they lack—top law schools or colleges, grades, pedigrees, enough clients, the finest cars, homes, independence, happiness, free time, stable families, loyal wives and husbands, or their health. In their limited amount of free time, these attorneys can often only imagine joy coming from massive spending and end up going into more and more debt. First it was educational loans, then came cars, then homes and it never stops.

Pretty soon the “dream” that the attorney is supposed to be living comes in fits and starts when he or she can get away from work. For many attorneys, their home life certainly suffers, and when they are “home” to live the “dream” they find their families aloof, often hostile, and angry with them for not being more present. How can an attorney be present at home if he or she is consumed by others’ problems and fighting to stay alive in a shark tank at work? When these beaten down and “spent” attorneys are at home they are often so tired they sit in a room isolated from their families with a television droning on while they drink themselves to sleep.

All of this is true, of course, but attorneys should step back from this and get a sense of



what is really going on. Is there a way to escape the insanity while still being a productive part of the legal world? What is the secret to achieving happiness in a job and world that seems so short-term and limiting? Are there “rules to the game” that can be deciphered and give attorneys happiness? Are there rules they are not seeing that the happiest and most fulfilled attorneys do see?

- **See [Top 14 Ways Attorneys Can Avoid Burnout from the Stress of Practicing Law](#) for more information.**

Make no mistake about it: there are plenty of happy and well-adjusted attorneys. There are many, many happy and well-adjusted attorneys. The problem is that attorneys do not know the rules for this and, instead, get swept up in the dominant rule system of our consumer-driven culture where everyone is marching to the same tune and set of rules.

When I started my career as a legal recruiter I found a job that I was unusually attracted to and believed I had an unusual skill set for. By the time I was less than six months into my legal recruiting career, despite working on my own, I was making numerous placements. I understood the game and took to it naturally, just as some people can sit down and play a piano “by ear” without ever having taken a lesson.

I may have had an aptitude for law as well; however, law firms are much better at pointing out what you lack, what you did wrong and how you can improve—down to the placement of a single comma, which I was once lectured about after turning in a memo that the partner disagreed with in terms of the comma placement—than they are at pointing out the things you are doing right. Even the most talented attorney may not actually find out how good they are at practicing law until they have been practicing a decade or more: The legal system is more about pushing you down than it is about encouraging you and pushing you up.

Because I was doing so well at recruiting, established recruiters and recruiting firms soon were approaching me to discuss joining them as their partners. I was at first quite



flattered and went to many lunches and dinners. Each recruiter I spoke with seemed to believe that I had some sort of “secret sauce” about what I was doing that I would share with them and that would make them rich. They were looking for my “tactics” and not an overall strategy that governed the entire way I recruited and made placements.

I quickly found out that most recruiters believed that recruiting was a game of “manipulative tactics” and about the things you said to candidates to get them to do things they might not otherwise do.

- Some recruiters would offer kickbacks to law firms and candidates.
- Some recruiters would have various sayings and things they would say to law firms and candidates to manipulate both.
- Some would write misleading advertisements.
- Some recruiters would hide the ball and not provide people with all of the jobs in the market—if they felt they were close to the offer.
- Some recruiters would badmouth other recruiters to try and get people to use them instead.
- Recruiters who employed other recruiters would generally have all sorts of games for manipulating the recruiters who worked for them.

All in all, what I saw was a constant game of tricks, manipulations and behavior that I did not like. Most of what I saw, however, was short-term thinking that was unlikely to ever lead anywhere. This short-term thinking is not just part of the recruiting industry, it is everywhere around us—including car companies offering rebates, companies playing games to get short-term profits, lawyers screwing over clients by padding bills, and banks and insurance companies taking advantage of their customers with fine print and “games” every chance they get. This is what this country has become because we are in a consumer-driven culture where short-term thinking and tricks are valued over what it takes to actually do something with substance and meaning.



What I noticed from the recruiters was that they were all interested in single transactions. In any situation where a recruiter or company wants more than a single transaction and loyalty, manipulations do not work. A politician can promise people the world, but if he does not deliver, where is he then when it comes time for re-election? Gift cards are a perfect example of how people are manipulated. Companies love selling gift cards because it is practically a license to print money and take advantage of people. The value of most gift cards is never fully redeemed—the cards are lost, people forget about them, they often come with expiration dates, or people simply do not use them.

About 15 years ago, I was sitting in a restaurant in Pasadena, California with a well-known recruiter—someone who called himself the “intellectual leader” of the legal recruiting profession—and he was talking to me about the reasons we should work together. He had all sorts of ideas of what we could do with the money we made (from building warehouses to investing in apartment buildings). He was working on his own and had an impressive pedigree in all respects. As I sat there, a few things occurred to me. He had no interest in building a business. Like a parasite, his only interest was making money and then doing something else with it. He was not that interested in the people he was working for or supposedly there to help. He viewed himself as an “opponent” of both law firms and attorneys: His role, as he saw it, was to manipulate both of them and get as much as he possibly could. He spoke of lawsuits and other ways he was able to get what he wanted.

The restaurant we were in was a family diner of sorts that had been there for over 50 years. I looked at the son of the owner happily checking customers out at the cash register. I saw the tables full of people socializing and enjoying their meals. I realized many of the waitresses had likely been there for years. The walls were lined with photos of employees and of the diner’s owner with various celebrities that had enjoyed meals there. What I saw was an “organism” and a working business that would continue as long as it provided a good service and made people happy. I also saw a family that may not have made a ton of money, but was happy and had a purpose and something that brought them together. It reminded me of the Greek diners I had seen around Detroit



growing up that stayed in the family for generations. The people there cared about their jobs and what they did—and they enjoyed it.

“What I want for my career,” I told the recruiter, “is to do something that has meaning, that I feel good about and betters people in the process. I want to build something like this restaurant that I can feel good about and that the people I deal with will feel good about. I really am more concerned with that than making money.”

“What do you mean?” the recruiter asked me. “I don’t understand.”

I attempted to explain all of this, as I have to others before, and all I received from this recruiter was smiles and feigned agreement. We were not on the same page at all. Most people are so sold on money, manipulation and other “games” in our society that they do not see the world in terms of doing good, providing value and building something of significance.

### **See the following articles for more information:**

- **[Add Value at Every Turn](#)**
- **[The Importance of Creating and Maintaining Value](#)**

Is building a successful Greek diner a good career message for attorneys? I believe it is. It is relevant because most attorneys out there are not building a business, or a life. Instead, they are manipulating a series of short-term transactions and playing various games to get ahead—none of which can make for a fulfilling career or life. In fact, all of these games make them pawns in the capitalist treadmill:

- Bill more hours and get ahead!
- Get the best education and get ahead!
- Get into the best law firm and get ahead!



- Pad your clients' bills and get ahead!
- Steal someone else's client and get ahead!
- Make your peers look bad and get ahead!
- Hire some associates to do work cheaply and get ahead!
- Find unnecessary work to do for your clients and get ahead!

While it is not completely forthright to call all of these methods “manipulations,” they are not necessarily “business building” activities. They do not give your life meaning and they do nothing more than give you a slight edge in the system. Like the rebate a manufacturer might use to generate additional business, they are all short-term fixes that serve to mask a larger problem: Not really having a business but, instead, being a “me too commodity” that has very little value in the chain of things. Just as a recruiter can manipulate people to get short-term results without building a business, so too can an attorney.

What do you think would happen to the Greek diner if it started using noticeably cheaper ingredients in its food, started “padding checks” and started manipulating people to spend more money than necessary? What if the diner started creating draconian work conditions for the staff? Eventually, the Greek diner would go out of business—it would lose its relationship with the community and it would lose the trust and goodwill of its employees and customers.

Unfortunately, this is how many attorneys run their legal careers. Instead of trying to be unique and providing value, they allow themselves to be commodities. Instead of building a business, they turn themselves into commodities—billing, competing and playing “short term” games to get ahead. They compete, scheme and become pawns of a Machiavellian system at the expense of their own happiness and long-term well-being.

To be truly successful as an attorney, you need to be a long-term thinker instead of a short-term thinker. You need to see the big picture about your career and what you are going to accomplish with it. You are building a business that is going to be around for 40



or more years. You want to be happy working in that business and you want that business to provide you with long-term security and happiness. If you are going to spend 40 years working in a business, it should not be something that destroys your family, makes you sick, creates anxiety and depression, and leads to cancer and heart disease. I cannot tell you how many attorneys I know from large law firms that have died in their 40s. It just does not work for most people.

- **See [Another Big Law Attorney I Know Just Died Young](#) for more information.**

You need to approach your career as you would a long-term business. This means that you make decisions based on long-range thinking and what makes you the happiest. You choose practice areas you feel comfortable with and that inspire you to go to work. You work in firms where you believe you will be part of the same team. You approach peers, clients and others as people and groups you want to have as long-term allies and not people to jump over, burn and create issues with. You operate your “business” in a way that works for you and the people around you. If you do not like your business then you do something else.

A career is like a small business and *the business is you*:

- You want to stay in business and not die.
- You want to enjoy your business and not dislike it.
- You want to profit from your business both when you are working and when you are not.
- You want to work with people you like and not those you dislike.
- You want to feel supported by the people you work with and not pushed down.
- You want to have the opportunity to grow and not be pushed into a corner.
- You want to feel like your job has a purpose and that you are accomplishing something.





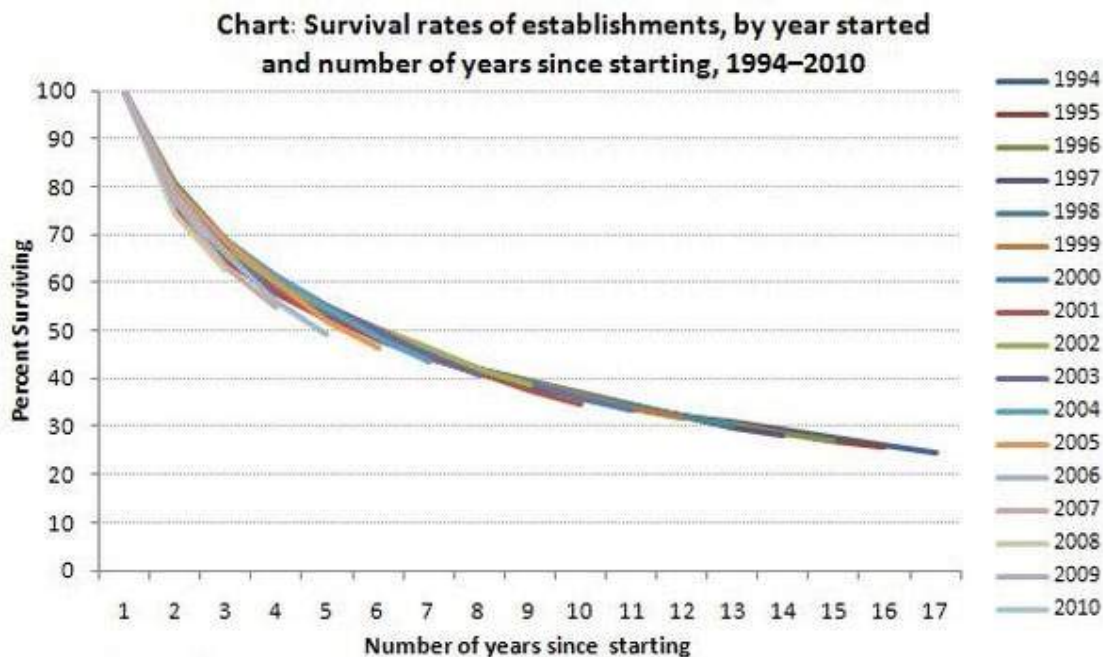
- You want to be energized by the work you are doing and not drained by it.
- You want to be interested in what you do so that you are compelled by it even when you are not working.
- You want to like what you do so you would be proud of your children doing the same thing—and encourage them to do it.
- You want to feel like you can get ahead by doing the right thing and not the wrong thing.

There was a time when attorneys graduated from law school and what they received, essentially, was a business license. They “hung up a shingle” and started operating a business where they were in charge of their own business. What has happened, of course, is that companies and law firms have gotten larger and attorneys have become “factory workers” and not people running their own businesses. They have become tools of large businesses and their value is what can be extracted out of them—mainly by the hours they bill and the business they bring in.

I am not criticizing this system, because it is simply a mirror of larger American and Western society as a whole—this is what happens under Capitalism and it is part of what people sign up for when they practice law in the United States. It is here to stay and not going anywhere.

What you should be concentrating on, however, is taking your career in a positive direction that leads to longstanding business. Being in business for the long term means doing the same thing successful business owners do and thinking in terms of long-term survival and happiness and not just manipulation, hours, prestige and dollars.

According to statistics, about half of all businesses fail within the first five years and a third survive ten years or more. Incredibly, when it comes to staying employed in a large to mid-sized law firm, the statistics of business survival are probably better than the average attorney experiences.



Number of years since starting	Year																
	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
1	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
2	79.8	79.2	79.0	78.8	80.6	79.6	78.9	75.5	78.4	79.2	79.1	80.0	78.3	77.2	74.4	76.3	—
3	68.5	68.5	67.6	68.7	69.1	67.6	66.3	64.5	67.5	68.4	69.1	68.7	66.2	63.4	62.4	—	—
4	61.2	60.5	60.4	60.6	60.2	59.0	58.5	57.5	60.2	61.4	61.3	60.1	56.1	54.9	—	—	—
5	54.9	54.7	54.1	53.5	53.6	53.2	53.1	52.4	55.0	55.3	54.7	52.2	49.3	—	—	—	—
6	50.2	49.5	48.8	48.1	48.7	48.7	48.6	48.2	50.4	50.1	48.2	46.5	—	—	—	—	—
7	45.8	45.0	44.5	44.2	45.0	45.0	45.1	44.5	46.3	44.7	43.7	—	—	—	—	—	—
8	42.1	41.4	41.2	41.0	41.9	42.1	42.1	41.2	42.0	40.9	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
9	38.9	38.6	38.5	38.2	39.4	39.3	39.1	37.6	38.7	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
10	36.4	36.3	36.0	36.2	37.0	36.8	36.0	34.7	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
11	34.2	34.1	34.0	34.0	34.8	33.9	33.4	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
12	32.4	32.2	32.1	32.1	32.2	31.7	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
13	31.0	30.5	30.4	29.8	30.3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
14	29.3	29.0	28.6	28.1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
15	27.8	27.1	26.9	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
16	26.0	25.7	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
17	24.6	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

Note: Dashes indicate not applicable.

For a full chart of this business failure and success data [click here](#).



The goal of any business is to survive. To understand how to survive you need to know the reasons most businesses fail so you will not fail. If you hope to remain employed for the long term, you sure as hell better hope you survive.

An attorney's career is no different than a small business. If you, as an attorney and proprietor of your very own business, hope to stay in business for the long term then you need to avoid making the mistakes that cause businesses to fail. Here are the top reasons that businesses fail. They are also the same reasons that attorneys' careers fail:

## **1. Being in Business for the Wrong Reasons**

When a business fails, it generally does so because the founders went into business for the wrong reasons. They may have gone into business just because they wanted to make money. They may have gone into business because they did not know what else to do or because everyone else they knew was doing the same thing.

These are all the wrong reasons for going into business.

A business that succeeds does so because the founder of the business has a passion for the subject matter. It may be a florist interested in flowers who starts a flower shop, or a pet lover who starts a dog walking business. It may be a family that loves food and community that starts a Greek diner in Pasadena. Regardless, it is the passion in the subject matter that makes people great at what they do and gives them the enthusiasm to get up and go to work each day. It was a passion for coffee and the "atmosphere" of the Italian coffee house that started [Starbucks](#); it was the passion for challenging the status quo that started [Apple](#) computer; it was the passion for discounting that started [Walmart](#); it was the passion for making air travel accessible to the masses that started [Southwest Airlines](#).

Most attorneys get law degrees and become attorneys for the wrong reasons—no question about it. They do it for prestige, they do it for money and they do it because they



do not know what else to do. If you are in that boat you are certainly not alone. However, your small business as an attorney is not going to survive if you cannot find a passion for what you are doing. You need this to be happy at what you are doing and to survive as an attorney.

**See the following articles for more information:**

- **[Why the Best Actors and Attorneys Are Exactly Alike](#)**
- **[Never Focus on the Money: Focus on Your Higher Purpose and Contribution](#)**

### **A Business Needs Passion to Survive**

When you have passion for what you are doing you also have drive and determination when others throw in the towel. If people stop buying flowers for some reason because of a recession, you find ways to make your flower arrangements and store more attractive and you innovate. You work longer hours because you love what you do and you find ways to get new customers.

- **[See Love What You Do](#) for more information.**

Attorneys also need to have drive and determination to stay in business. There is no business that will test an attorney's drive and determination more than practicing law. You need to stay motivated because you will be tested at every turn—by competitive people who want you to slip up, by changes in the economy, by not making partner when you think you deserved it, or by being a partner who is not bringing in enough business. In all these situations and more you need to have the internal resources to adapt, innovate and press on.

This is a competitive game and a serious one. You need to be resilient and really want to be there. Passion will carry you through. If you love what you do, love solving problems, feel that what you do is important and that at a visceral level you were “born”



to be a counselor and advocate, then you are in the business of practicing law for the right reasons. You will have the drive and determination to keep going no matter what obstacles are thrown in your way!

- See [The Only Thing That Matters is Commitment](#) for more information.

### **A Business Needs to Be Empowered by Its Failures to Survive**

Businesses are exposed to failures on an ongoing basis. Every business faces numerous obstacles. The businesses that survive are the ones that experience failures and are empowered by these failures, learn from them, improve and keep going. You need to learn from your mistakes and failures if you are going to stay in business.

All attorneys have multiple failures. They get fired, have bad performance reviews, lose important clients, join the wrong firms, start off in the wrong practice areas and make all sorts of mistakes. These errors are par for the course—but they are not something that should force an attorney to give up based on even a few of them. A good attorney will always be persistent and continue going no matter what.

- See [Learn from Every Experience You Have Ever Had](#) for more information.

### **A Business Needs to Want to Serve People to Survive**

People that start businesses want to serve people and get along with a wide variety of people. They want to help people and not cheat them. They want to provide a better quality service than others provide and they care about the quality of their work. Apple makes simple intuitive products because it wants people to be able to use them and enjoy them. MP3 players existed long before the iPod and computers existed long before the Macintosh. Apple continually makes products easier to use because it wants to serve people. This has made it the highest valued company in the world.



Attorneys that succeed want to serve people as well. They think about doing the best possible job and are more concerned with this than short-term goals such as profit. Attorneys want to serve their superiors when they start out and then serve the profession as a whole the longer they are in the game. They put others first and not their own egos. Walmart grew, for example, due to its relentless and extreme focus on low prices and margins. It puts people first. Every business that does this generally experiences some level of success. The more emphatic this focus on others is, the better the business does.

When you go into a business establishment that cares just about profit and not about you as the customer, you pick this up very quickly and do not want to deal with them in the future. The same goes for attorneys: When you deal with attorneys focused just on themselves it is obvious, and whether you are a lawyer working with that attorney or a client deciding whether to hire that attorney, you pretty much always decide to get away as soon as you can.

- **See [Over Deliver Because It is Not About You](#) for more information.**

## **2. Managing the Business Poorly**

A business could be poorly managed for a variety of reasons. The business might not do accounting properly or might not know how to hire the right people. A poorly-managed business might treat customers poorly, provide poor products and services, deliver its products and services in an untimely manner, fail to keep up with market changes or fail to maintain updated, good-looking facilities with customer-friendly hours.

### **You Need to Provide Outstanding Quality Work**

I have seen numerous businesses go out of business for providing a poor service. It happens all the time. It also happens with attorneys. Attorneys need to provide the best quality work product they can to their superiors and clients. The product should not just be “sufficient”. It needs to be outstanding. A sufficient product will get OK results, an





excellent product may get good results and an outstanding product will get excellent results.

Law firms easily weed out attorneys who provide products that are OK, or even excellent. You need to provide the most outstanding product possible or your competition will. A well-managed business is constantly improving its product and delivering more and more value to justify its prices and to get the best results possible for everyone involved. There is no excuse for not providing outstanding quality work.

Your work needs to be on time and it needs to be delivered when it is due.

You also need to be on top of the service that needs to be provided. An attorney can never stop learning and needs to continually improve his or her skills and knowledge, whether through CLEs or other learning-oriented activities that make the attorney stronger. An attorney should always be improving and updating his or her skills. Businesses that stay in the past often end up providing outdated products or services and go out of business. The same thing goes for attorneys.

**See the following articles for more information:**

- [\*\*You Must Produce and Do Quality Work\*\*](#)
- [\*\*The Importance of High Standards in Your Life and Career: What High Standards Mean\*\*](#)

**You Need to Know How to Treat Clients and the Attorneys You Are Working for (and With)**

If a business is rude to clients or others, it quickly gets a poor reputation and people stop doing business with them. A well-managed business provides the best possible customer service and is pleasing in terms of how it deals with the public.



As an attorney, you need to treat your superiors, co-workers and clients extremely well. If you do you will get a good reputation and people will want to work with you. You will be “in demand” and operate a successful business. If people do not want to work with you then you are likely to be in trouble quite quickly.

I have seen partners, associates and others who did not know how to treat others go out of business. This is a huge cause of business failure and something that you need to guard against and constantly improve in. Practicing law is a service profession that requires you provide the best possible quality service.

- **See 5 Toxic Behaviors That Push People Away: The Best Way to Recognize These Behaviors and Change Them** for more information.

## **You Need to Keep Your Facilities in Tip Top Shape**

People want to deal with businesses that are clean, have pleasant surroundings and make them comfortable to be around. There is no shortage of businesses that become “tired” and “drab”. People stop going to these places. The best businesses are always reinventing themselves so they look “fresh” and new. A McDonald’s, for example, seems to be redesigned and freshened up once every few years—very few McDonald’s ever get too tired, and I am sure there is a reason for that.

Attorneys should never let themselves go and should stay fit, sharp and on top of the ball. This is not a requirement, of course, but you are going to get more business if you look, act and feel your best. An attorney is a “representative” for the attorney’s client, and the attorney’s appearance has an impact on how his or her client is perceived. If the attorney is unkempt and has scuffed shoes or a frayed shirt collar, this is something that sends a message. If the attorney is pale, lethargic and unhealthy looking, this says something to the client (and their superiors).

You need to look your best around your superiors and clients. This counts.





### **3. Location, Location, Location**

A major cause of business failure is the location the business chooses. If you are in the wrong location, the clients do not come. You can have no business without any clients.

In the legal world, the location an attorney chooses could be based on geography, practice area, firm size or client-base. Needless to say, having access to work is unbelievably important. If you go to New York as an associate you may get plenty of work, but it may be more difficult to generate clients in the long run because of how competitive the city is and its billing rates. There are a series of tradeoffs that all attorneys make and must make in their careers to determine what is best for them. Nevertheless, if you choose the wrong city, practice area, or firm the results can be terrible. More attorneys fail because of this than I can count. To stay employed as an attorney you need to evaluate this information very closely.

#### **A Large Law Firm is Often Not the Best Location**

Something I have noticed again and again is that if an attorney joins a large law firm out of law school, the attorney is far more likely to not be practicing law five years (or even one year) later than if the attorney had joined a smaller law firm. I am not sure of the reasons for this; however, the larger law firm may very quickly test the will of the attorney compared to a smaller law firm.

**See the following articles for more information:**

- **[The Benefits of Avoiding the Large Law Firm](#)**
- **[Real Challenges of Working in a Large Law Firm](#)**

#### **A Large City is Often Not the Best Location**

Large cities expel attorneys they do not need (or who have run their course) like viruses.



However, I look at law firm websites all day (and have been for nearly my entire career) and the funny thing I have noticed is that when you get into smaller markets you start seeing lots of very, very old attorneys in the largest firms, but very few of them in the firms in larger cities. Why the difference? There are also fewer mass layoffs in smaller cities and, in general, you are more likely to survive “as a business” in smaller towns and cities—albeit, for less money.

### **Certain Practice Areas Are Better Than Others**

Practice area decisions are careful calculations that involve a variety of calculations that I am going to discuss in another article. However, these are calculations you should make carefully. The more you do something everyone else is doing the more difficult it will be to distinguish yourself. The more you do something unique, however, the smaller the market will be for your services. These, unfortunately, are the difficult decisions every business-person must make when deciding what sort of business to be in.

**See the following articles for more information:**

- **[Choosing a Practice Area](#)**
- **[Choosing Between Corporate and Litigation Practice Areas: Which is the Better Choice for Your Legal Career?](#)**

### **Conclusions**

The only way you are ever going to enjoy being an attorney and succeed at being one, is if you realize (1) that you are part of a brutal, unforgiving capitalist system with its own set of easily identifiable rules and (2) realize that you are a business within this system. The more you realize you are a business and the more you do the things that make businesses succeed and not fail the better off you are going to be (and the more successful you will be).



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You can operate your business in any way you like, but there are rules that will make you succeed or fail in that business. Your goal, of course, should be to succeed. Only by seeing and conducting yourself as a business (and not an assembly line factory worker) will any of this ever mean anything. You should want your life to have significance and stand for something: ***Unless you can step outside of seeing yourself as a factory worker you will never have that.***

A good business (even a Greek diner) gives meaning to its community, makes people happy and operates in all economic climates. It may just be a Greek diner, but it has meaning for the people that are associated with it and it can make its owner happy. Your career should also have meaning and you too should be happy with your business.

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