

Top 5 Reasons Attorneys Leave Law Firm Jobs Voluntarily

By Harrison Barnes from Los Angeles Office Managing Director

Summary: Learn the five most common reasons attorneys choose to leave their law firms and what these choices may mean for their future.

Attorneys leave law firms on a continual basis.

The reasons why they leave can vary from lawyer to lawyer.

Hopefully, these [attorneys have a good reason as to why they're leaving](#).

That reason will have a lot to do toward them getting a position at a new firm.

There are many reasons that attorneys leave law firms, just as there are many reasons they choose to stay. The reasons you choose to leave (and how you explain these to other firms) can make it harder or easier to get a position at another firm. Here are the five most common reasons attorneys choose to leave their firm:

You left to start a business. This suggests a lack of commitment. If you have done this, the odds of you reentering a major law firm again are extremely limited. You will have an almost impossible time because firms will believe that it is close to certain that you will leave again to do something similar. Running most businesses is far different than working in a law firm. If you left to start a business once, the odds are pretty good that the day-to-day hassle of working in a law firm is not going to appeal to you. Moreover, if you were running a business and now want to return to the practice of law, this suggests you failed. That is not good. Law firms want to hire people who have succeeded and not people who have failed. Also, law firms will wonder why you did not go back to your original law firm.

You had a life event that made you leave. If this is true, why not go back to your original law firm? There is nothing wrong with having a life event, but law firms will want to understand how serious this event was and whether the seriousness of this outweighed your commitment to your law firm and practicing law.

You left because of the commute. This is becoming a more and more common reason for attorneys leaving firms. [This also suggests a lack of commitment. Your job is expected to take priority over everything.](#) If you have issues with your commute, what will happen if you firm moves offices, or expects even higher hours out of you?

Hostile work environment. If you are in a hostile work environment (and many attorneys are), then your best bet is to get another position while you still work there (as quickly as possible) and not leave before you get another job lined up. You are expected to handle the environment (within reason).

Hours are too much. This suggests the same lack of commitment. Law firms think that you will leave again due to the hours. There are few "lifestyle" law firms in big law. Most law firms will be concerned that when "the peddle gets to the metal" you will not work hard.

See the following articles for more information:

- [Why There Are No Lifestyle Law Firms](#)
- [The #1 Attorney Career Killer That Attorneys Are Never Taught](#)
- [There Are Only Three Reasons an Attorney Should Ever Switch Law Firms](#)