

32 Warning Signs for Attorneys Facing Job Loss



Summary: *There are 32 common signs that attorneys can pay attention to in order to reduce their chances of being fired.*

People make a lot of mistakes in their jobs. Attorneys are no different. In “[Top 32 Reasons Attorneys Lose Their Jobs Inside of Law Firms](#)” by Harrison Barnes, attorneys can learn what mistakes other attorneys are commonly making. Don’t make one of these mistakes that ultimately will cause you to lose your law firm job.

While the fact of the matter is that most attorneys will lose their position at some point or another at a law firm, it shouldn’t be because of a simple mistake. Losing your job in a law firm can be a career killer so don’t let it happen lightly. Understand what may cause you to easily lose your job is the best so that you don’t fall into the same trap as others.

Here is the list of warning signs:

1. Low hours
2. Not enough business
3. Lower qualifications than others in your class
4. Last hired in your class
5. Undermine a superior
6. Direct anger at management
7. Too senior
8. Ego problem
9. Make it clear you have other priorities
10. Activities outside work cause problems
11. Ask for too much money
12. Question quality of a superior’s work or abilities
13. Embarrassment at office retreat, party, or another event
14. New management after a merger
15. Take extended leave or multiple leaves
16. Sexual harassment allegations
17. Substance abuse problems
18. Refusing to do all of the work given
19. Lying on resume
20. Collections are low compared to number of hours billed
21. Caught lying
22. Firm has less work
23. Sued for malpractice
24. Not easy to work with
25. Unwilling to put in extra effort
26. Bad attitude
27. Firm does not like your work
28. Wrong culture

29. Wrong side of office politics
30. Work in branch office
31. Make a really bad mistake
32. Practice area is suffering

These signs can be grouped into smaller categories including morals and ethics, commitment, and value. Attorneys lacking in a strong moral fiber that are willing to lie, steal and cheat their way to the top will get caught at some point. Their efforts will eventually catch-up and back-fire on them. A law firm is not going to show that they are accepting of someone with a dishonest act.

Law firms expect and demand full commitment from their attorneys. An attorney that talks too much about their desire to be anywhere else but at work is going to be seen as a risk. The risk may be that your brain is not fully invested in the project so mistakes are made or that you may just decide to leave the firm one day anyways so the firm figures why wait. With this, law firms also want to have attorneys that want to be at work, putting forth every effort they have to make the law firm look good and perform the best. Toxic attorneys can damage the entire group, leaving everyone disgruntled about working on a sunny day. An attorney that constantly complains will be fired quickly.

Law firms also expect and demand attorneys to pull their share of the weight. If an attorney is getting up there in years of experience but is not supporting that experience with their own book of profitable business, the firm will get tired of paying them a hefty salary with no return. Attorneys billing the most hours and bringing in the most business will not have to worry about the security of their job. An attorney that consistently questions authority and causes problems for the firm legally will not find a friend in the firm. There are appropriate ways of handling concerns about another attorney's work or behavior but it still usually leads to the attorney having a short future with the firm.

Many law firms will experience a lag in the amount of work they have. If you are not the most qualified, working in a slowing practice area, and was hired more recently than the others in your class, then you should be very concerned about being let go. Start the process of looking for a new position now so that if the times comes that the firm does drop you, you already have a new position lined up.

Do you think attorneys make other common mistakes? Tell us in the comments below.

To learn more about how to survive in a law firm, read these articles:

- [10 Reasons Attorneys Are Ruining Their Futures in Law Firms](#)
- [How Do Control and Energy Affect a Lawyer's Career and Personal Life?](#)
- [Top Mistakes Attorneys Make That Ruin Their Chances in Big Law Firms](#)

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