

Attorneys Do Not Make Good Entrepreneurs



Summary: *Learn why entrepreneurs and attorneys are generally not the same people because of a large difference in personality traits.*

While there are many characteristics that are similar between attorneys and entrepreneurs, there are plenty of traits that are different and make any transition from attorney to a more business-minded career difficult. In [“Why Attorneys Often Fail as Businesspeople and Entrepreneurs,”](#) Harrison Barnes explains why attorneys struggle when they give up law for a business or entrepreneurial type career.

The biggest mistake attorneys make is to leave the law to pursue other opportunities that often don’t work out. Careful consideration must go into the decision of leaving the law because once it is done, coming back to work as an attorney is next to impossible. The responsibility of being an attorney are heavy but many often give up before exhausting all their options to stay in the legal world.

The characteristics that go into being a successful entrepreneur that differ from being a successful attorney include an optimistic outlook. Entrepreneurs take risks, coming up with an idea for their business and then sell others on the idea. They rely on the uncertainty of the business whereas attorneys rely on the certainty. Attorneys find support and comfort in knowing that there are set rules. They don’t like that there are risks associated with a business. They give up quickly and easily when things go wrong but entrepreneurs know that failure is a given and so they just keep trying until they find success.

If you take a look at the legal industry, not much has changed over the past twenty plus years. Technology has made a few adjustments to how attorneys conduct their work but most law firms are behind the times in their use of technology. Compare this to businesses that are always having to change to keep up with demands. They are creating new products, new services, and new ways of doing business.

Attorneys are stuck in a mindset that intelligence and credentials entitle them to success. Attorneys work hard to get into a top law school where they can graduate with top grades because they know doing such will greatly increase their chance of landing positions with the best law firms. Entrepreneurs understand that business does not care about those things. While intelligence and credentials may play a role, they do not guarantee anything and entrepreneurs do not expect them to.

There are, of course, exceptions to this. There are some attorneys that can become very successful entrepreneurs. There are a number of attorneys that have experience in the business world before entering law school and the legal industry. Also, attorneys that turn into entrepreneurs usually don’t spend much time as attorneys before making the switch. These attorneys immediately start out in the legal industry learning how to and developing their own law firm. They know how to market and advertise where most attorneys don’t. Even if the attorney stays with the law firm and becomes a partner, to get the level of partner and maintain it, they have to be able to support the business side of the law firm.

Attorneys that find themselves hating everything about the work they do and the legal industry are better off finding something else. As Barnes explains, “Quitting the practice of law is like ending a bad relationship.”

Do you think attorneys would make good entrepreneurs? Tell us in the comments below.

To learn more about what makes attorneys successful, read these articles:

- [Successful Actors and Attorneys Are Very Alike](#)
- [Being a Successful Attorney Takes More Than Just Hard Work](#)
- [The Seven Burdens Attorneys Face That Drag Them Down](#)

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