

Finding a Reduced-Hour Arrangement in a Law Firm is Possible



Summary: *An attorney wishing to work in a reduced-hour position can do so if they are in the right market or practice area.*

Not every person working in a law firm is working maximum hours. There are a few positions that allow for reduced-hours. Harrison Barnes explains how to get one of these positions in his article [“The Best Ways to Get a Reduced-Hour Position Inside of a Law Firm”](#). There are five

1. Assuming you already work for a major law firm, asking for a reduced-hour arrangement is possible if you have a good reason. Men and women can ask for the alternate arrangement, with their reasons generally involving childcare or illness. Whatever the reason, you must make it clear that you have to be at home. Large law firms are better suited to cater to this kind of arrangement because of the kinds of clients they work with. Their clients bring a large amount of work that can handle being parted out without ruining the quality.
2. If you have a rare skill or specialized practice area that is in demand, any law firm will take whatever they can. This circumstance is not very common but can happen if you are the right candidate. This generally is in the patent prosecution market because their expertise in areas like genetics, pharmacology, and specific classes of drugs.
3. If you are willing to be a staff attorney or contract attorney, any law firm will consider a reduced-hour arrangement. Staff attorneys make less than money than full-time attorneys at major law firms. However, staff attorneys can freely leave the office when 5 o’clock rolls around. Attorneys that are willing to accept less money will have no problem getting hired by a law firm for less money. Contract attorneys have the ability to work flexible hours so they may put in more hours one week and then only a few hours the next few weeks. The downside to these positions are that they have very little future and will not be permanent. If you are a contract lawyer with a law firm because of your practice area, the law firm may eventually hire a full-time attorney in your practice area, making your contributions no longer necessary. Staff and contract attorneys usually get the least interesting work.
4. Attorneys working in smaller markets will have an easier time securing a reduced-hour arrangement. Law firms in smaller markets already understand that their attorneys probably won’t be working long hours. These law firms have different expectations from their attorneys.
5. Even smaller law firms in major markets don’t expect their attorneys to pull all-nighters. They may be willing to allow an attorney to have a reduced-hour arrangement because their expectations are different. Generally, this circumstance is similar to attorneys that are in specialized practice areas like patent prosecution. Small law firms are still under a great amount of pressure to perform highly to compete with large law firms so they will be willing to accept the right candidate and at the right price.

Do you think attorneys that go for a reduced-hour arrangement are committing career suicide? Tell us your thoughts in the comments below.

To learn more about career suicide, read these articles:

- [Going In-house Is Career Suicide for Good Attorneys](#)
- [10 Mistakes Attorneys Make That Kill Their Careers](#)
- [Working Part-Time Isn’t Always Career Suicide for Attorneys and Professionals](#)

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