

## Lawyers Sacrifice Lifestyle for Success



**Summary:** *The best and most successful law firms and attorneys do not embrace a separate life from their work because the work is their life.*

The legal industry, with very few exceptions, is a lifestyle. Lawyers work, eat, and sleep their job. Their work is a part of everything they do, not only because it is expected and required of them but because they want to. Successful attorneys are good at what they do because they love what they do. Eventually, being consumed by their work is all they know and will often be lost without it. Harrison Barnes explains in [Why There Are No Lifestyle Law Firms](#) that attorneys live for their career.

Attorneys hoping to be successful must devote their time to their work. An attorney that is not billing the most hours and getting all their work done is in danger of losing their job. Attorneys not only must do their work in the office, they are expected to write and speak about their work outside the office. Sometime during all of these commitments, attorneys must be picking up clients and bringing in business if they want to feel safe in their job.

Barnes states, “In many law firms going to work can be likened to going to war. You either accept it’s your job and embrace being a warrior, or you reject this. ... You cannot just decide you are going to war and fight 50%; if you do this you will die.”

He also likens the job to being a child on the playground. Attorneys can get pushed and shoved around by each other if they are not aggressive or hard working at all times. There are a few law firms that encourage their attorneys to maintain a healthy lifestyle but these firms struggle to keep their clients. These law firms fade away because clients need their work done in a timely manner. If their attorneys are taking the evenings and weekends off, the work is not getting done so the clients move on to other law firms that can produce faster results.

Law firms that advertise themselves as lifestyle law firms either shut down or change their structure so that they are no longer a lifestyle law firm. A law firm just starting out may try to advertise itself as a lifestyle law firm in order to recruit attorneys. Unfortunately, this is a recruitment tactic that gets lawyers in the door but is not something that can be maintained if the law firm wants to keep the doors open. Eventually, the law firm will incorporate minimum billable hour requirements to earn a competitive salary.

There are certain areas of the country where a lifestyle law firm could never survive. Major markets have the biggest clients and the most intense work. Smaller markets where the work isn’t as time sensitive can better support a law firm with a work-life balance. There are also a few practice areas like ERISA, tax, and patent prosecution that can support a more lifestyle-friendly style.

Do you think its unrealistic for attorneys to focus solely on their work? Share your thoughts with us in the comments below.

**To learn more about how to succeed as an attorney, read these articles:**

- [Being a Successful Attorney Takes More Than Just Hard Work](#)
- [Why Networking Is Essential to Your Success as an Attorney](#)
- [Four Mistakes Attorneys Make about Law Firms That Affect Their Long-Term Success](#)

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