

How Working at Certain Types of Law Firms Affects Your Career



Summary: Depending on which type of law firm you decide to work for or try to work for will affect your future career opportunities.

Read [The Five Types of Law Firms: How Joining One Type Versus Another Can Impact Your Legal Career](#) to learn more.

There are five general types of law firms that lawyers can work at. Not every attorney is the right fit for working at all kinds of firm so it is important to choose the right one. Harrison Barnes teaches us about the impact working at each firm can have on an attorney's career.

Read [Which One of the Four Types of Attorneys Are You?](#)

The five general types of law firms are main offices of large national law firms, branch offices of large national law firms, midsized law firms, newer fast-growing law firms, and boutique law firms. Some of the factors that are affected include compensation, job satisfaction, job security, training opportunities, and options for lateral movement.

1. Main offices of large, established law firms

Pros: These law firms are prestigious with important work, high salaries, high profits-per-partner, “brand” names that make rainmaking easier, and greater opportunities of training to become better attorneys.

Cons: Large established law firms are grueling places to work. Only a few of the most valuable attorneys are given long-term benefits and job security. Many attorneys that work in the kinds of law firms want to leave after a few years because they are so unhappy from the buildup of long hours and stress.

2. Branch offices of large, established law firms

Pros: Working at branch offices provides better quality of life and work-life balances as well as better opportunities to advance in the firm at some locations.

Cons: There are more downsides to working at branch locations such as a limited range of work providing less experience and overall training. The amount of billable hours is often less so it can be harder to get ahead compared to the main offices. Job security is very low as many branches are open to serve a few clients on big cases so there is always a chance of being laid off.

3. Midsized law firms

Pros: This kind of law firm is found in more regional markets so there are many advantages. Attorneys can expect to be happier, have a better life work balance and more career advancement opportunities.

Cons: The pay is lower than at large law firms. The type of work is less sophisticated in the levels of work quality expected.

4. Boutique law firms

Pros: The amount of exposure to clients and hands-on experience early in an attorney's career are greater at these kinds of law firms. They also can get more interesting work and work alongside partners to form stronger relationships.

Cons: Boutique firms rely on just a few attorneys to bring in the revenue compared to a larger firm. With just a few being responsible for the work, they may feel they are entitled to greater compensation. Making partner in a boutique firm is difficult unless you are bringing in your own business.

5. Newer, fast growing law firms

Pros: All law firms have to startup at some point in all markets. The opportunities are endless in startups because no one yet knows where the law firm will grow and end up.

Cons: The risk of new law firms collapsing is great. Unless the firm is managed correctly, attorneys may get the wrong idea about compensation and other expectations.

See [Harrison Barnes Explains Why Attorneys Need to Keep Working](#).

Do you think attorneys fully understand these things before they graduate from law school? Tell us what you think in the comments below.

To learn more about what law firms are looking for, read [Australian Attorneys Most Sought after by Law Firms](#).

Source: <http://www.bcgsearch.com/article/900047251/The-Five-Types-of-Law-Firms-How-Joining-One-Type-Versus-Another-Can-Impact-Your-Legal-Career/>

Photo: [blog.hillsbank.com](#)

www.jdjournal.com