

Top Mistakes Attorneys Make That Ruin Their Chances in Big Law Firms



Summary: *There are many things that attorneys do that ruins their chances of remaining in a big law firm that you need to know about so you don't make the same mistakes.*

Read [10 Biggest Career Mistakes Big Law Firm Attorneys Make \(and 10 Ways to Survive in a Big Firm\)](#) to learn more.

Once an attorney gets a top job at major law firm, there is little chance that they will ever be able to top it. Attorneys that join big law firms directly after law school will likely never make that much money again, work at a law firm as prestigious again, work with as big of clients again, or even still be practicing law after ten years. Harrison Barnes teaches us how to keep a job in a large law firm so that you don't give up the high paycheck, best clients, prestigious job, and future in law by accident.

The number one mistake attorneys make is being psyched out. Here are the ways they do that:

- Attorneys get themselves psyched out. When review time comes, many aren't able to withstand the negative criticism. First year associates will also receive bad reviews because they are new at their job and learning things as they go. Once you have been at the firm for a few years, the reviews will become glowingly positive.
- Attorneys give up when things get tough. They may have to deal with a difficult client or case and throw in the towel. You put years of work getting to where you are so you don't just think it's all over because of one case that isn't much fun.
- Attorneys fall into the trap of believing things are sunnier on the other side when in all actuality, every large law firm is the same. In the end, all law firms are businesses that need to make money. To make the big bucks, they have to be billing as many hours as possible which means that first year associates have to work 80 plus hour weeks.
- Attorneys may receive a small bonus check and think the end is coming. The reasons for receiving a small bonus are endless. The firm may be struggling so you are lucky to even get a bonus or the firm may have made promises to the partners leaving very little left for associates. It does not mean the firm dislikes you. Some firms even withhold bonuses as a way of testing the loyalty of its attorneys.
- Attorneys are human so they will make mistakes. Attorneys that make mistakes should not be concerned and think they aren't good enough for the job. Take your mistakes and learn from them and never make them again.
- Attorneys often focus on how others treat them, especially superiors in the firm. Some people are just always cross so it has nothing to do with what you did and is only about them.
- Attorneys think their job is a popularity contest when in reality it is about getting the work done. Being well-known and liked is great but what the partners will remember most about you is the quality of work you produce, not how popular you are in the office. By avoiding being part of the "in-crowd" you save yourself from the eventual falling out and damage it has on your career.
- Attorneys that don't have enough work get freaked out and make mistakes. Law firms will have slow moments but that does not mean it is the end. If the work slows down, find other things to keep you busy that will help draw attention to the firm such as publishing articles on relevant issues or writing memos for partners.
- Attorneys that are just starting out may become intimidated working next to big time attorneys with amazing work history. These attorneys may be more qualified because of their experience that does not mean you are not qualified to be there with them.

To learn the other nine mistakes that attorneys make, read the full article [here](#).

Read these related articles from Barnes on how to be successful in a big law firm:

[How Working at Certain Types of Law Firms Affects Your Career](#)

[10 Factors That Matter More Than Where You Went to Law School](#)

[Factors Law Firms Look at When Hiring](#)

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