

# What small practices can learn from small businesses

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Law school teaches you many wonderful things. Unfortunately, business acumen is often not one of them. Your practice is also a business and there is much that you can learn from other successful small businesses. Finding your space in the crowded landscape of big established law firms can prove difficult, and other small businesses face the same challenges. The corner coffee shop must compete with Starbucks. The local hardware store is in competition with Home Depot. When this is the reality for your law practice, it is important to identify ways to stand out in the crowd. I hope some of these tips will help you establish your practice as a viable legal option in your community.

## Accentuate the positive

Stop seeing your size as a negative. Many clients prefer to deal with smaller firms. Celebrate your size by marketing your practice as a boutique or niche firm. You can accentuate your ability to provide personalized service to each of your clients. Look at small businesses in the area. They pride themselves on not being the huge franchises. They are proud to be small and mid-sized businesses that serve their customers and clients well.

## Location, location, location

Unlike the big firm that must occupy the top floors of a multi-level office building, your practice has the ability to occupy a more informal, close-knit space within your community. Why not find a location that places you in the ideal location for foot traffic or within a community where legal services are

less than abundant? Be strategic when choosing your location. Pick a location that supports your small firm status.

## **Brand your practice**

This goes along with accentuating the positive. Branding is even more important when you are competing with big law firms. Large businesses often lack personality, but small business successes are commonly based on the people running the business. Brand your law firm and use that brand consistently on all of your correspondents. Every letter, business card, or invoice leaving your office, should include your law practice brand.

## **Fill in the gaps**

With a little research, you can find out what services big firms are lacking, so you can fill in those gaps. Small businesses seek to provide services not provided by large corporations. For example, a local farmer's market is successful because it offers produce that is fresher than what customers can buy at the larger grocery store. Listen to clients and look at large firm reviews to identify gaps that your practice can effectively fill.

Successful small businesses use strategic plans to secure a place within their respective markets. Borrow some of these tactics to establish your practice among the big law firms.

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### **About Erika Winston:**

*Erika Winston is a freelance writer with a passion for law. Through her business, The Legal Writing Studio, she helps legal professionals deliver effective written messages. Erika is a regular contributor to [TimeSolv](#) and a variety of other publications.*