

You're a good attorney, but are you a good businessperson?

We've talked a lot about the importance of having business sense when operating a successful law practice. A recent [article](#) by employment placement agency BCG Attorney Search discusses failed entrepreneurship among attorneys who leave the legal field for alternative business opportunities. In reading the article, I found that it also provided guidance for implementation of successful businesses practices within a law firm. Below, I will discuss some of those tips and how they may assist you and your practice.

Learn the business side of business

I have said it before and I will say it again. Your law practice is a business and you need to understand what is required to successfully manage it. Most law schools fail to prepare new lawyers for the challenges of entrepreneurship. It's about much more than hanging out a shingle and heading to court. A successful legal practice also requires business acumen and at least some understanding of concepts, such as revenue, management, and human resources. If you feel less than confident in these areas, consider taking some short courses. Most community colleges offer condensed business classes, or check out what's available online. This extra effort could mean the difference between a successful and failed legal practice.

Taking risks

Most entrepreneurship involves a risk. There is no guarantee that any business venture will thrive, but successful entrepreneurs put forth their best efforts and take the steps anyway. Risk and the practice of law rarely go together. Attorneys generally like to avoid risk, or at least control it as much as possible. When looking to expand or strengthen your business, risk avoidance may not get you where you are trying to go. Business growth requires some uncertainty. Now, I'm not suggesting you take actions that could put your practice in jeopardy, but a bit of an investment in a new marketing strategy or bringing on a skilled administrator could result in substantial payoffs for your firm. Embrace some risk, with optimism that the steps you take will ultimately result in your success.

Customer service matters

Every good entrepreneur knows the value of a positive customer experience. Consumers talk. When they have a good experience, they want to sing your praises and tell others about the excellent service they received. Unfortunately, the urge to share is even stronger when the customer experience is less than ideal. This is no different from the clients you serve everyday. Never underestimate their value and provide them with legal services that exemplify respect for their time and money, as well as appreciation for their patronage. Exemplary customer service comes back to you in the form of positive reviews, referrals and a well-earned reputation for excellence.

Your law practice is also a business. (Yes, I said it again.) Treat it as such and you could experience years of growth and financial success.

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.