

# Law Firm Specialization: Why It Matters

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While in theory, the idea of casting a wider net may lead you to believe that you'll catch more fish, the truth is it doesn't always apply to business. When it comes to catching customers, the more you appeal to one specific kind of customer, the higher your success rate, and the more qualified you'll be at what you do. Practicing law is no exception. In today's age, more and more law firms are starting to recognize legal specialization as a necessity for tapping into their target market. Not only does it benefit clients, but it also benefits legal professionals.

## Benefits for Lawyers

### Better Client Relationships

When you specialize in an area of law, you intimately know your niche, whether that be corporate law, health law, criminal law, environmental law, or international law. As such, you can provide the best possible representation to your clients and better pinpoint solutions to their problems as a certified specialist. Exclusively specializing also means that you are well informed of all of the latest updates, news, legal issues, strategies, and changes in that area of law. When compared to having a general understanding of the law, this is a tremendous benefit to your clients since you offer tailored legal guidance unique to their circumstances. A law practice that has handled hundreds of cases similar to their clients' can anticipate and navigate the nuances of such a case on a much deeper level than someone who doesn't have the same kind of experience under their belt.

### Less Competition

As an expert in a very specific area of law, you effectively position yourself as the easy choice to opt for you over a competing attorney with a more generalized approach. In essence, your competitor pool shrinks significantly. General practice attorneys with a wide breadth of practice areas are going to be competing with every other such law office within a ten-mile (or more) radius. Yet, if your law practice specializes in boat accident cases, you're likely one of few options, if any, in your respective region, thereby lowering your marketing costs, and potentially increasing client acquisition volume for this legal specialization. Assuming your reputation is top notch, the more specific you can be about your legal services, the more challenging it is for competitors to keep up with you.

### Improved Visibility

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Law firms that choose to specialize don't just stand out, but are often featured in publications related to their practice area. The more you can partner with local businesses that are related to or adjacent to your area of expertise, the greater your sphere of influence. For instance, if your practice focuses solely on estate planning for the highly wealthy, you'll likely opt to leave business cards where the wealthy are bound to spend time, like country clubs, civic clubs or auctions. Get creative with candidates in your referral network; it'll pay dividends over the lifetime of your business.

## Greater Satisfaction

As the saying goes, "do something that you love and you'll never work another day in your life." When choosing what you want to specialize in, consider an area that speaks to you on an emotional and even philanthropic level. One of the benefits of choosing a niche is doing something that you truly enjoy day in and day out. Not only will you get a real sense of fulfillment on the best days of your profession but clients can easily sense when your practice area originated from a true passion of yours. Plus, it's *always* more advantageous to be a big fish in a small pond as opposed to a small fish in a big one.

## Increased Expertise

Expertise involves becoming a thought leader in your area of law. Naturally, mastery requires experience. Attorneys who bounce between different types of cases don't have the same familiarity with the nuances and challenges as someone who handles the same type of legal representation every time. While it's always a good idea to have legal malpractice insurance, specializing in one niche area of expertise may also lessen the chances of your law firm having to put it to use. When you are recognized as an expert in your specialization area, you don't just attract more clients, but you also win more referrals through client trust.

## Better Efficiency

Completing the same workflows and legal documents over and over again in quick succession equates to faster completion, since you know them inside and out. As such, specialized lawyers can master the administrative side of running their law firm in a fraction of the time.

In today's legal climate, more and more legal professionals are turning to automation tools to streamline recurring processes such as client intake and billing. Time-consuming document generation, for instance, can now be done in a matter of seconds rather than hours thanks to automated workflows.

## Greater Profitability

When your practice is specialized you'll [increase your value](#) thanks to the power of referrals. Concentrating on one type of case brings extra knowledge and experience to the table that clients yearn for, who will in turn refer you to their friends and family. Since [80% of a law firm's business typically comes from referrals](#), the more targeted you are, the more your practice may benefit from word of mouth.

As a result of your greater understanding of the inner workings of certain cases, you'll develop a strong reputation for getting clients the results they're after, ultimately increasing your overall profitability. The more you can offer experience paired with efficiency, the more work you can take

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on, increasing your overall revenue.

## **Benefits for Clients**

### **Improved Guidance**

When a client seeks out a legal professional that is well versed and focused on their particular needs, they in return receive much better guidance for their specific context. Beyond the legal support that a specialist offers, also comes a deeper understanding of the emotional needs of their client. For more turbulent cases such as divorce cases or immigration, a specialized lawyer can be an enormous benefit to the mental well being of those they have trusted with their case.

### **Increased Network**

Specialists have a wide network of other experts that they can use to the client's advantage. Because they have a more comprehensive list of contacts to support their case, clients have greater access to leading experts who can provide adjacent services and even strengthen their case.

### **Better Success Rate**

There's a reason why general practitioners in the medical field typically don't perform spinal surgery — because it requires unique skills. The same logic can be applied to law. Attorneys specializing in a particular field generally have a higher rate of winning cases in court or settling successfully. Specialized lawyers who see the same case types day in and day out can offer a much higher success rate based on experience and dedication. Those who hire specialized attorneys generally are more at ease knowing they're in good hands when it comes to their legal proceedings.

## **When is a Good Time to Consider Specialization?**

It can be unnerving to dive into specialization from a generalized legal focus, so it's important that you read the room first. In order to ensure that whatever you choose to specialize in will deliver the kind of demand that you hope for, answer the following questions using the data at your disposal:

- What trends are you seeing in the types of cases you currently manage?
- What is your success rate in those cases?
- How satisfied were the clients?
- Which cases have been the most lucrative for you?

If you notice that you take on a considerable amount of one type of case that's yielding happy clients, then it's a good indication that it would make a great choice to specialize in. If you don't feel like you have the experience or know-how to call yourself an authority on one particular niche yet, then allow yourself more time to grow.

Ultimately, there is no defining moment that is the same for every lawyer who chooses to specialize. It all comes down to how much knack and drive you have for one kind of legal resource.

## **How to Identify Your Specialization Niche**

### **1 Create a Vision**

Every achievement starts with a vision. Your vision will be the very foundation of your overall success, and how you are perceived as a brand. When creating your vision, take into account not only your skills but also what drives you. How do you see yourself representing your clients and what do you hope to achieve for them? Are you passionate about one type of law specifically, such as civil rights, intellectual property, or family law? What do you love about practicing law and why? Let these answers be your guiding light when forming a vision for how you hope to stand out.

## 2Consider Your Experience

First and foremost, it's ill-advised to choose a niche that you have no experience in. [Choosing to specialize](#) in something that you aren't well versed in would not only be setting yourself up for failure, but it's a risk to any potential clients who choose to come your way.

One of the greatest tools you have for narrowing down your choices is consulting with other more experienced lawyers and mentors. Ask them for their advice based on personal stories, recommendations, and experience-based guidance.

Talk to other lawyers that specialize in the area you're considering and pick their brains. Be direct and ask the questions that matter most like:

- **What are the biggest challenges in this area of law?**
- **What are the greatest rewards?**
- **What is the success rate?**
- **What are the long-term implications?**

When you hear about the advantages that law firm specialization can offer, it may be tempting to jump in head first. Yet, it's important to step back and assess all of your choices. Weigh out the pros and cons, and go back to your overall vision.

Rushing in too quickly can lead to prematurely pigeon-holing yourself into something that ultimately restricts you from your full potential and passions.

## Pick a Specialization and Pursue it

There are many advantages to becoming a specialized legal professional. If you can manage to pick a niche and master it, you won't just find yourself with less competition, but you'll have a greater devotion to practicing law.