

The Rewards of Building a Niche Law Practice

Article By:

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In this month's issue of the *ABA Journal*, there is a wonderful [article](#) that features several attorneys who have built a successful niche law practice for themselves. Some came through serendipity and some were planned for and pursued.

To help pay off her law school loans, one lawyer took a side job at a bar specializing in craft beers. Through her local bar association (the legal one), she met a winery attorney and realized she knew a lot of brewers but no brewery attorneys. She knew the alcoholic beverage industry was heavily regulated, so she burnished her legal skills by taking additional classes applicable to the alcohol industry and started speaking at craft beer conferences. She got clients and soon had a full-time practice dedicated to craft breweries.

Then there's the attorney who's also a marathoner. In 2009, he was wearing a fitness tracker while training and it came to him that there were not many lawyers specializing in digital privacy (this was almost a decade ago). He's focused his practice on small and medium-sized companies that don't have the financial and security resources that big companies do to protect customer data privacy.

Some of the rewards of building a niche law practice include:

- You limit the competition when you specialize.
- You are more easily able to differentiate yourself and your practice.
- Clients seek out lawyers with extensive knowledge in a particular field.
- Law firms are looking for highly specialized attorneys. According to a 2017 Robert Half Legal survey, 67% of firms said finding legal professionals with specialized skills was somewhat or very challenging.
- Companies are also hungry for niche lawyers so they don't have to hire expensive outside help.
- You can make a living in a field you love.

So how do you find your niche? The lawyers who have done it recommend the following:

- Find a legal area of specialization you love because you will be immersed in it for your career.
- If you are already practicing in a general area, find a niche within that area. For example, some family law attorneys decided to specialize in LGBT divorce once gay marriage was legalized.
- If you can identify an underserved need in the market, go for it. One Michigan personal injury lawyer decided to focus only on child lead paint poisoning cases when he discovered there were no other attorneys in his state focusing on these cases.
- Some of the least saturated markets are those on the cutting edge (e.g., cannabis law).
- Examine your previous education and work experiences to see if you can find a niche there. For example, if you have a science degree, you might want to pursue a niche in environmental law.
- In addition to your personal interests, consider what may be a good fit for your geographical area.
- Network with successful niche lawyers to find out how they discovered their specialization and what additional skills or certifications may be necessary for you to excel in those areas.

As I've always said, it's the niches that lead to the riches. That has never been more true than it is today.

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