

Connecting Attorneys with Their 'Why' Through Virtual Law Firms

by John Lively, Esq.

Why do people become attorneys? Why are they involved in the practice of law? Most attorneys join the legal industry to help people while solving complex problems that benefit clients in their greatest time of need. Very rarely, if ever, do they say they started their legal career wanting to max out their billable hours and spend years climbing the hierarchy of a law firm.

So why are today's attorneys frequently detached from the reason they started law in the first place? Most are working the grind, experiencing long nights and weekends, knowing their professional self-worth is being measured by a number; that number being billable hours.

It's crazy. It's not sustainable and burnout is inevitable, especially because it deviates so far from why they wanted to practice law in the first place. Treating attorneys like actual people by giving them autonomy to practice law in the ways they know work for their clients is what virtual law firms offer.

What is a virtual law firm?

A virtual firm allows attorneys to reconnect with the part they actually like about being a lawyer - practicing law. The technical component that separates a virtual firm from a traditional one is that an attorney's entire practice can be accessed with a laptop, allowing them to work with clients from anywhere in the world. The strategic use of technology supports attorneys and the administrative work behind being a lawyer which allows for a virtual law firm to operate in parallel capacity to a traditional firm.

Virtual firms usually are cloud-based so attorneys can access files, communicate with clients, and research from anywhere. These firms use best-in-breed software and automation to help with billing, financial management, reporting, risk management, and client information. Wherever the attorney goes, so does their practice. It's where innovation meets law, resulting in more optimized firm management than ever before.

At its core, modern firms are more about providing attorneys with the autonomy they need to practice law at their best than anything else. Not having a centralized office is just a small part of how attorneys take back control. Attorneys can practice their trade at a very high level and deliver those services in a more streamlined and efficient way. Helping lawyers realize that there is a way to get control of their lives and still deliver those services is what virtual law firms offer lateral transfers.

Who Joins Virtual Firms?

Most attorneys who work at virtual law firms are innovative, tech savvy (or very eager to become tech savvy), and entrepreneurial. They recognize that practicing law can be in their control - that there's a different way. Virtual firms give attorneys the opportunity to increase their take home pay, implement alternative fee arrangements, collaborate with other attorneys across time zones (and even continents), work when and where they are most productive, and still have a personal life.

In addition to the technical and monetary benefits, having a culture with colleagues who also are early adopters of the virtual law firm model makes a drastic difference in attorneys' daily lives. While there may not be the

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traditional water cooler chats, you can have virtual happy hours or a quick coffee together at the click of a button.

The virtual environment allows attorneys the space to have focused time by setting their calendars to 'busy' while making it easy to connect with each other without the headache of booking a conference room. Constant disruptions throughout the day become a thing of the past, leading to a culture where people choose to and want to collaborate with colleagues rather than feel forced into small talk.

This modern way of working is here to stay, which means virtual law firms are no longer an unexpected choice for attorneys. Over 1,000 attorneys work in office-free law firms in the US, and that number continues to rise. Virtual law firms are growing at exponential rates because attorneys are reconnecting with the passion they have for practicing law while elevating their clients' experience.

Our Why

At Practus, our why behind launching a virtual firm in 2018 was to create happier attorneys - attorneys who are excited to practice law and embrace the future of the legal industry. Based on feedback from our clients and our attorneys, happier attorneys produce better work product and forge better attorney-client relationships every step of the way.

Ask your candidates, "What is your why?" "Does your current firm allow you to connect with your why behind practicing law?" If the answer is no, encourage them to consider looking for a firm that

creates a bridge between their why and their legal career instead of putting up barriers between the two.

While virtual law firms may not be for every lawyer, they offer an innovative solution for those looking to do things differently and reclaim their practice. Including virtual law firms in your client roster provides you with a wider variety of alternatives for your candidates, thereby helping you make more—and better—placements.

John Lively, Esq. is Managing Partner and Founder of Practus LLP, a modern virtual law firm that has experienced exponential growth since launching in 2018. He's on a mission to change the practice of law and show the industry there is a different way. Lawyers can be in control over their practice, have a personal life, and enjoy being an attorney again. For more information, contact our VP of Recruiting and NALSC sponsor:

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