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How To Set Lawyer Career Goals (With Benefits and Tips)

[Indeed Editorial Team](#)

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Law is a competitive field that requires motivation and expertise, in addition to skills like communication, organization and attention to detail. Becoming a lawyer or attorney can take several years, and it involves getting extensive education and experience. If you're interested in pursuing a law career, it's important to create a list of goals to motivate you to succeed throughout your journey.

In this article, we discuss lawyer career goals and list the benefits of setting them, explain how to decide on specific career targets and share tips for fulfilling these goals.

What are lawyer career goals?

Lawyer career goals are objectives that motivate aspiring and current lawyers to succeed within their profession. Lawyers are highly trained legal personnel who specialize in providing legal counsel and representation to either public or private clients. They may set career goals to provide themselves with attainable targets for growth. These goals can include winning a specific amount of cases or representing a certain amount of people.

For lawyers who work in a firm, it's important to set goals intending to surpass competitors and satisfy clients. For attorneys who work in the public sector, such as public defenders, goals are important for meeting the standards of county court proceedings and providing quality defense to those who can't hire private counsel.

Related: [How To Become a Good Lawyer: 10 Tips for Career Success](#) 

Benefits of setting lawyer career goals

Setting career goals can help an aspiring lawyer:

Create milestones

One benefit of setting career goals as a lawyer is the ability to create and meet personal milestones. Milestones are a specific stage of meeting a goal, usually by a certain time frame or productivity quota. They're important for showing people how their hard work can contribute to the overall success of a project or business. For lawyers, setting career milestones can motivate them to gain seniority within their field.

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Explore different areas

Having career goals gives you the opportunity to explore the type of law you want to practice and the areas you may want to transition into if needed. For example, if you're a litigation attorney, you might set a goal to work on cases in four different areas of the law. This can help you learn about other fields while still advancing your career. If you enjoy one of those four areas, you might even decide to switch your career focus to it.

Related: [22 Fields of Law To Consider \(Careers and Average Salaries\)](#) 

Help a firm grow

Another benefit of setting lawyer career goals is the ability to help your employer or a firm grow in quality and size of clientele. Providing quality service and informed legal counsel can create loyal customers, increasing the scope and financial success of a firm. By assigning yourself specific career goals, you can ensure that you're contributing to the growth of a firm and achieving the next step of your career plans.

Related: [10 Different Law Firm Positions and What They Do](#) 

Provide top-quality service

By having specific career goals, lawyers can gain the motivation to succeed and win cases and settlements for their clients. Providing high-quality services can lead to more satisfied customers, and legal organizations may gain a consistent and strong clientele as a result. Setting goals can also help an attorney stay motivated over time and maintain quality in the services they provide.

Related: [Top 11 Pros and Cons of Being a Lawyer](#) 

How to set lawyer career goals

Here are some steps you can follow to set your own lawyer career goals:

1. Choose a career path

The first step to setting your career goals as a lawyer is to determine what kind of legal work you're interested in practicing. Lawyers can work in both the private and public sectors, and they can specialize in a variety of law disciplines, such as entertainment, real estate, civil and criminal law. Once you've chosen your career path within the legal industry, you can set more specific career goals.

Related: [15 Types of Lawyers: Roles, Duties and Earning Potential](#) 

2. Assess your strengths

Conduct a self-evaluation to determine what your biggest strengths as a lawyer are. Reference past casework and law school assignments to understand which areas of the field you're the most proficient in and where you could improve. Knowing your strengths can be helpful when creating goals because it allows you to keep them attainable, meaning within your skill and experience level.

Related: [9 Skills for a Successful Lawyer \(And Tips To Improve Them\)](#) 

3. Make a plan

After choosing the type of law you want to enter, you can create a tentative career plan. Most lawyers begin their careers before passing the bar by working as clerks, receptionists, legal assistants or paralegals while still pursuing their undergraduate or legal degrees. Decide what lawyer positions you are or aren't interested in, and consider the milestones you can reach with each job opportunity.

Related: [Can You Take the Bar Exam Without Going to Law School?](#) 

4. Find a mentor

Once you've decided on a tentative career plan, your next step is to find a mentor. A mentor can be any person who provides you with knowledge, resources and support in your field. Consider contacting past law professors, employers or personal contacts who have experience and connections within the legal industry. They may introduce you to new colleagues, provide industry knowledge and resources and share potential job opportunities.

Related: [10 Reasons Why You Need a Mentor](#) 

5. Set your SMART goals

Once you've completed all the preliminary work for creating your goals, you can begin defining them. It's helpful to use the SMART method when creating goals, which means ensuring they're specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and timely. Your SMART goals can help you succeed in whatever stage of your lawyer career you're in, and you can modify your goals or create new ones over time to meet your current work circumstances.

Related: [Guide on How To Write SMART Goals \(With Examples\)](#) 

6. Stay accountable

After setting your career goals, it's important to remain accountable for your actions regarding your career growth. Try to check in with yourself regularly to see how much progress you've made in meeting your goals and strategize what you can do differently to increase your level of success. Meet with your mentor and ask them to keep you accountable for your work and progress in your legal career path.

Related: [Career Outlook and Challenges for Lawyers \(With Salaries\)](#) 

Tips for fulfilling lawyer career goals

Here are some tips you can follow to help you set and achieve your lawyer career goals:

- **Write your goals down.** Make a list of your goals in a place where you can reference them easily and remind yourself of what your aspirations are.
- **Review your goals regularly.** You can revisit your goals on a regular basis to ensure you're meeting all the objectives within the time frame that you've given yourself.
- **Learn from law experts.** Talk to other people who work in law to learn about the daily duties of a lawyer. This can give you a better understanding of the expectations of the job when setting goals.
- **Focus on one goal at a time.** Legal work requires considerable effort and focus, so concentrating on individual goals can help you preserve energy and stay motivated.

