

Career Interview  
Business Owner / Attorney

Name: Brian Harrison

Job: Attorney

How long at job: 20 years

**What do you like about the job?**

Flexibility, creativity, constantly challenging.

**What is challenging?** Lots of pressure because clients have lots at stake, constant deadline and workflow challenges, the work is often very adversarial

**How is the job rewarding?** It's financially rewarding. There is social prestige associated with it, so it opens lots of doors socially and politically. I meet lots of interesting people and work on interesting cases. I get to help people solve important problems.

**What has changed in the profession in the last 5-10 years?** Technology has radically changed the field. Attorneys have to be more technologically advanced. Technology has changed the business model, so you have to work more efficient in order to be profitable. The traditional billing model, the billable hour, doesn't work as well as it used to. Since technology enables you to complete tasks more efficiently, you are able to bill fewer hours for your work and have to take more cases to earn the same amount of money as before. Alternative billing arrangements, like menu pricing, or fixed fee arrangements are becoming more common, which reward efficiency.

**What is continuing to change?** Technology continues to advance. The profession is becoming more specialized. Attorneys aren't able to have general practices anymore. You need to focus on becoming an expert in one or two particular areas in order to be competitive and to keep current.

**What do you expect to change in the next 5-10 years?** There will be fewer attorneys, as fewer people are going to law school, and baby boomer attorneys are rapidly beginning to retire from the practice of law.

**What sort of training/education did you need for the job?** I had to go to college to earn a bachelor's degree and then go to law school for three years, so seven years of college. I then had to pass the bar exam in Ohio to become licensed to practice. I have to take 12 hours of continuing education every year to maintain my license.

**Was it difficult to find work?** No. I started out working in the prosecutor's office. Then I went into private practice, first in a law firm and then I opened my own office.

**Has the job market changed?** Yes. There are generally fewer legal jobs than when I started out. Different practice areas have lost jobs while others have gained. Real estate and bankruptcy law are areas that were booming ten years ago but have lost lots of jobs recently. Family law is in high demand right now.

**Do you think it will change?** Yes. Some practice areas will expand while others contract.

**What advice would you give someone just entering this field?** Find a good mentor, be willing to continue to read and study and learn about your practice area your entire career.

**How should I prepare to enter this field?** Get a bachelor's degree. Pick a major that will teach you to read analytically and to be a good writer. Make good grades. Take the LSAT and go to

law school. Work on becoming a fast and efficient reader, speaker, and writer. Avoid getting into any financial or legal trouble.

[What do I need to know in order to be successful in this field?](#) You will need to be a career long learner. You will need to constantly learn and adapt to changes in the law and in the business of law.