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From Courtroom to Camera: Why Lawyers Are Leaving Big Law for Lifestyle Content Creation



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 **Title of Article**

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Abstract

The legal profession is undergoing a quiet but profound transformation as a growing number of lawyers particularly those in Big Law transition from traditional legal practice to full-time content creation. While this trend is increasingly common in the United States and Europe, African lawyers remain largely unable to make similar moves due to structural, social, and financial barriers. This paper explores the motivations driving lawyers out of Big Law, the skills that enable their success in content creation, and the stark regional disparities in mobility and opportunity. The paper argues that this shift reflects broader systemic challenges and opportunities within the legal profession, calling for reform in legal education, policy, and firm culture to address the evolving career aspirations of 21st-century lawyers.

Keywords: *Big Law, Lifestyle content creation, Lawyer burnout, Work-life balance, Digital entrepreneurship, Legal profession transformation, Career mobility, Legal education reform, African legal systems, Lawyer-influencers*

Introduction

The legal profession, long regarded as one of the most prestigious and stable career paths, is experiencing a quiet revolution. Increasingly, lawyers particularly those in high-pressure "Big Law" firms are leaving behind their traditional roles to become full-time content creators in the lifestyle space. These individuals are documenting their lives through travel vlogs, beauty tutorials, wellness journeys, entrepreneurial ventures, and more, often monetizing their content through brand sponsorships, YouTube AdSense, merchandise, and paid partnerships. While this phenomenon is most visible in the United States and Europe, it also reveals a stark contrast in professional mobility between these regions and African countries, where such transitions remain financially and socially challenging. This paper explores the motivations behind this exodus, the regional disparities, and the implications for the future of the legal profession.

Understanding the Trend

The rise of digital platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube has democratized access to audiences, enabling individuals from various professions to become influential content creators. Lawyers are no exception. Former attorneys are now leveraging their organizational skills, public speaking abilities, and professional discipline to create polished, engaging content that resonates with large audiences. While legal content creation does exist, what distinguishes this trend is the pivot toward lifestyle content travel diaries, skincare routines, home organization, fitness regimens, and entrepreneurial advice rather than legal education or commentary.

The visibility of these creators is enhanced by their unique combination of professional authority and relatable personal experiences. Many started content creation as a side hobby during their tenure in law firms. Over time, the growing success and income from these ventures, combined with the pressures of legal work, prompted a career shift.

2. Motivations for Leaving Big Law

2.1 Burnout

Big Law is notorious for its demanding work culture, long hours, and high-stress environment. Many lawyers report experiencing burnout, mental health challenges, and a lack of personal fulfillment. Content creation offers a creative outlet and a reprieve from the relentless pace of firm life.

2.2 Work-Life Balance

Content creators often enjoy flexible schedules and the freedom to work from anywhere. This autonomy is appealing to those who have endured the rigid structure of law firm hierarchies and client demands.

2.3 Creative Fulfillment

Unlike the often procedural nature of legal work, lifestyle content creation allows for personal expression, storytelling, and the pursuit of passion projects. It taps into creative potential that may have been stifled in traditional legal roles.

2.4 Financial Independence

Contrary to assumptions, content creation can be highly lucrative. Brand partnerships, advertising revenue, and product sales can surpass the earnings of junior or even mid-level attorneys. This financial potential makes the switch not just viable but attractive.

2.5 Organic Transition from Hobby to Career

Many lawyers begin creating content as a personal project or hobby. As their audiences grow and monetization becomes possible, the decision to pursue it full-time becomes more practical and less risky.

3. The Role of Legal Skills in Content Creation

Legal training is not wasted in this transition. Former lawyers often apply their knowledge of contracts, intellectual property, negotiation, and compliance to manage their content businesses effectively. Understanding the fine print in brand deals, navigating copyright issues, and maintaining professionalism contribute to their success.

Moreover, their status as former lawyers enhance their credibility. Audiences often perceive them as intelligent, disciplined, and trustworthy qualities that benefit their brand and marketability.

4. Regional Trends and Barriers

This trend is predominantly observed in the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, and parts of Europe, where lawyers may have more financial cushioning, access to larger digital markets, and cultural acceptance of career pivots.

In contrast, lawyers in African countries face significant barriers, legal salaries may not allow for risk-taking. There is often societal pressure to adhere to traditional career paths. Some jurisdictions have strict codes of conduct limiting public visibility and commercial activities outside legal practice. As a result, African lawyers rarely leave formal practice for digital entrepreneurship, even if they desire to. Their aspirations are often curtailed by practical limitations, despite similar dissatisfaction with traditional legal roles.

5.The Response of Law Firms

While many lawyers leave Big Law voluntarily, some are pushed out or discouraged due to their growing online presence. Certain firms have fired associates or declined to renew contracts based on the perception that lifestyle content is unprofessional or distracts from client work.

However, this is beginning to shift. Some firms are becoming more open to flexible arrangements, recognizing that employees may have diverse interests and talents. The evolving conversation about work-life balance and employee well-being is prompting a reassessment of firm policies regarding side gigs.

6.Implications for the Legal Profession

The movement of lawyers into lifestyle content creation signals broader changes in the legal profession. Firms may lose skilled professionals who seek more fulfilling careers. The public visibility of former lawyers can shape perceptions of the legal field. Law firms and regulatory bodies may need to reconsider policies on digital entrepreneurship. Law schools may need to prepare students for non-traditional legal careers. This trend also opens dialogue on mental health, work culture, and the sustainability of Big Law as a long-term career path. Firms may benefit from introducing hybrid models, mentorship programs, or creative sabbaticals to retain talent.

7.Recommendations

To address the shifting professional landscape, this paper recommends Law firms should allow part-time or remote work and accept side hustles that do not conflict with client obligations. Firms should provide well-being resources and normalize conversations around burnout. Bar associations should modernize rules to reflect the realities of digital visibility and entrepreneurship. Legal education should include courses on personal branding, digital entrepreneurship, and financial literacy.

8.Conclusion

The decision of lawyers to leave Big Law for lifestyle content creation reflects a significant cultural and economic shift. While the trend is more prevalent in the U.S. and Europe due to greater flexibility and financial security, it exposes global disparities in professional freedom and mobility. As the legal profession grapples with evolving expectations and values, firms must reconsider how they support and retain talent in a world where alternative careers are more visible and viable than ever before.

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