# ClioCon 2015: The Sweet Spot for Lawyers with Legalzoom's John Suh

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## John Suh, the CEO of Legalzoom, gave an insightful keynote talk at ClioCon.

John noted that there is a sweet spot for lawyers that want to practice law. As a consumer of legal services, Suh noticed that lawyers at law firms, with around 7 year's experience, provided the best value in terms of price and experience. These lawyers had deep subject matter expertise and a lower billable hour rate than partners that had been practicing for 20+ years.

In Malcom Gladwell's book,Outliers, he posits that it takes 10,000 hours for someone to become an expert in their field. This theory supported Suh's observation about lawyers with 7-8 years of experience. Lawyers in the firms hired by Suh spent 88% of their time on the practice of law, and only 12% of their time on the *business* of law. This let these lawyers build their expertise quickly, amassing 10,000 billable hours in an average of 5.6 years. Suh quoted a study that found that the most efficient law firm has 11-20 lawyers. 90% of their time is spent on billable work!

Solo's have to spend more time on the business of running their practices. Suh cites a figure that solo and small law firms spend 39% of their time running their practice, rather than practicing law. Because of split attention, solos may not be able to reach the 10,000 hour mark until they have practiced for 25 years!

Lawyers in large law firms and solo firms both work equally hard, but solos have to master a wider range of duties.

So, how can solo firms organize themselves to be more efficient and build their experience more quickly? Suh had several ideas. Listen to this interview with him by Legal Talk Network to hear his proposed solutions to help lawyers and law firms.

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