

EXPLORING A LAW FIRM BUSINESS MODEL TO IMPROVE ACCESS TO JUSTICE AND DECREASE LAWYER DISSATISFACTION

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Unmet Legal Need

- Currie, 2007:
 - ~45% of adult Canadians have experienced justiciable problems over a 3 year period
 - ~12% of those sought legal assistance to deal with their problem
 - Problems made daily life difficult for a majority of the following problem types:
 - Employment
 - Social assistance
 - Disability pensions
 - Housing
 - Immigration
 - Discrimination
 - Police action
 - Family
 - Wills / Powers of Attorney
 - Personal injury
 - Hospital treatment and release
 - Threat of legal action

Lawyer Dissatisfaction/Attrition

- ~20% of lawyers report being dissatisfied with their careers
- Pay has not been shown to be a significant factor in career satisfaction
- In BC, ~33% of female lawyers had left practice within 5 years, compared to 17% of male lawyers
- Women leave practice 60% faster than men
- Small firms are least successful in retaining women

(Sources: Wallace, 2001; Wallace, 2001; Schlesinger, 2012; Kay, 1997; Kay, 1997)

Implications

- Can we reorient practices to both improve lawyer retention/satisfaction and improve access?
- If so, where would we expect these changes to come from?
- What does this mean for legal education?
- Is there an under-explored market for some types of legal services?