



[R.I.P. Law Firm Business Model?](#)

By Stephen Fairley

<http://bit.ly/oQRGxT>

An op-ed piece entitled [The Law Firm Business Model is Dying](#) appeared yesterday on the *Wall Street Journal's* website authored by Clifford Winston and Robert W. Crandall of the Brookings Institute.

Winston and Crandall are co-authors of the book, *First Thing We Do, Let's Deregulate All the Lawyers*, which was published last year by Brookings and argues that the legal professional should be deregulated because it is a monopoly, charging prices for services that cannot be economically justified.

The crux of yesterday's article is that the legal industry business model is unsustainable due to the fact that large clients are taking more work in-house to reduce costs and consumers are using DIY online legal services to achieve the same benefit.

The authors argue that "the rational response would be for new, low-cost legal firms to start up, and for incumbents to reduce costs and attract new clients by providing innovative services. But that is happening only to a limited extent because of state licensing requirements and American Bar Association (ABA) rules."

The article has already generated 99 comments, on both sides of the argument. It makes for some interesting reading. I have been teaching law firm marketing and business management to attorneys for years through state and local bar associations and our own Rainmaker Institute programs, including the [Rainmaker Retreat](#). In a vast majority of these sessions, at least one attorney will always ask me why they don't teach these business principles in law school.



As I have said many times, the legal profession is a business. If you make poor business decisions, you will fail, no matter how brilliant a legal strategist you may be. If you fail to provide value and effectively demonstrate the benefits to your target market of the services you provide, you will fail.

There is no question that the same forces that enabled Amazon to change the way we buy books and Apple to change the way we buy music are bringing about a similar evolution in the way consumers buy legal services.

The question to be answered now is, will law firms innovate or die?



Stephen is the CEO of The Rainmaker Institute, the nation's largest law firm marketing company specializing in lead conversion for small law firms and solo practitioners. Over 8,000 attorneys nationwide have benefited from learning and implementing the proven marketing and lead conversion strategies taught by The Rainmaker Institute, LLC.

He works exclusively with attorneys and partners at small and solo law firms to find new clients fast using online and offline legal marketing strategies and to convert more prospects into paying clients using automated marketing and by fixing their follow up systems.

Stephen is a nationally recognized law firm marketing expert and the international best-selling author of 12 books and 7 audio and video training programs.



He is a Registered Corporate Coach (RCC) through the Worldwide Association of Business Coaches, has a Master's degree in Counseling and a second Master's in Clinical Psychology. Stephen's doctoral training is from Wheaton College (IL) in Clinical Psychology and he practiced as a therapist for several years in Virginia and Chicago.

After leaving the field of clinical psychology Stephen founded and ran two technology companies, one in the restaurant industry and another in the health sciences field prior to launching Today's Leadership Coaching, LLC, a Chicago-based professional business coaching and consulting firm. The Rainmaker Institute, LLC grew directly out of his experiences first speaking to, then coaching, consulting with, and training attorneys. Since that first event at the State Bar of Wisconsin, Stephen has worked with over 8,000 attorneys from virtually every state in the country and almost every practice area.

Stephen's work has been noted and quoted in the American Bar Association's Journal, Entrepreneur, Inc., Fortune Small Business, Harvard Management Update, Business Advisor, the Chicago Tribune, Crain's Chicago Business, and on the front covers of AdvantEdge and Choice magazines. He is a member of the prestigious National Speaker's Association and his Rainmaker seminars are sponsored several times every year by some of the largest state and local bar associations in the country.

On a personal note, Stephen loves to travel and has been to 28 countries, has taken 12 cruises (all over the Caribbean and recently to Alaska), he enjoys boating, fishing and his two Bichon Frise dogs, is married to his college sweetheart, Ruth, and loves living in the desert just outside of Phoenix, Arizona.

For more information Please go to:

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