

ATTORNEY AT LAW - GAME DESIGN DOCUMENT

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Headline features

Law firm management

Build a law firm from the ground up - starting with just one employee (yourself) and eventually building up to a team of hundreds of attorneys, while hopefully making a bunch of cash to boot

Idle game features

Your attorneys will handle litigation, leaving the high-level corporate management decisions to you. Hire more attorneys and buy upgrades for both them and your firm to increase profits and get more cases.

Resign at any time

You can resign as CEO of your law firm at any time; doing this resets your progress, but all of the cash you've earned and cases you've solved become Reputation Points, which you can spend to add upgrades that augment your run and make you more successful faster.

High-level gameplay

Objective

The objective of the game is to make a trillion dollars, enabling the player to buy out every other law firm and become the most powerful lawyer in the nation.

How to play

The player achieves the objective by hiring attorneys, taking cases and winning payouts for their clients, of which they get a cut. They can also buy upgrades that make their attorneys more effective at winning cases, or which increase the amount of money they get from successful litigation.

The player can hire employees and then distribute them as needed to perform certain legal or clerical tasks (e.g.: accountancy, which increases the speed with which revenue can be converted into spendable money through the tax process). A full list of purchasable units is detailed below.

The player can also occasionally spend employees from the pool to obtain other benefits.

As the player hires more employees, the cost to hire new employees increases in-line with the player's estimated revenue.

The player can also spend money to build facilities, which in some cases can be further upgraded to provide benefits to the firm, and in some cases can be staffed with employees to improve its function.

At the beginning of the run, the player is a solo practitioner of law. They take on cases to make revenue, and then put that revenue through the bookkeeping process themselves. These processes are only automated when employees are hired.

Controls

Camera

On desktop platforms, the player can move the camera freely using the mouse by clicking and dragging, or the keyboard by using the WASD or arrow keys.

On controller, the player can move between departments by using the right and left bumper. They can see what order the departments are moved between from a row of department icons at the bottom of the screen.

Buying upgrades

On desktop platforms, the player hovers over the department to view the upgrade menu, and clicks to select the upgrade they would like.

On controller, the player can reveal and hide the upgrade menu using the right-most action button.

Triggering Executive Suite Recognition

On desktop platforms, the player triggers Executive Suite Recognition by clicking the circle that appears over the given department.

On controller, the player triggers Executive Suite Recognition by pressing the left-most action button.

Units

Introduction

Units are employees who have been mobilised to a particular section of the company. The firm can spend money to hire new employees, who then sit in an employee “pool” until mobilised.

Units generate Fatigue while working. Fatigue is a measure of the department’s stress, and is affected by the complexity of their workload, the intensity they are being asked to work at, and occasionally by other external factors.

How fatigued a given department is is measured by a bar underneath their department’s facility. If a department reaches maximum fatigue, they burn out, and operate at 30% efficiency until the fatigue bar drains.

To avoid fatigue damage, the player can instruct the department to work at 75% efficiency, which reduces the output of the department but causes the fatigue bar to gradually drain over time. Alternatively, the player can order the department to crunch, which increases the department to 120% efficiency but causes the fatigue bar to max out much faster.

Issues relating to fatigue can be mitigated through upgrades.

Attorney

Attorneys are the firm’s lawyers, who litigate cases for their clients and win payouts when successful. The more attorneys the firm has, the more cases the firm is capable of handling. In addition, once the firm has more attorneys, the player can spend money to unlock a higher tier of case, which generates more revenue.

The higher tier the case, the longer it takes for attorneys to generate revenue from completing them, though litigation speed can be increased through upgrades.

Attorneys take a cut of cases they win in the form of bonuses; this cut can be reduced by purchasing upgrades.

Paralegal

Paralegals are not qualified to practise law, but are legally knowledgeable and assist attorneys with their work. Paralegals serve as a “force multiplier” to the effect of attorneys, and the degree to which attorney revenue is multiplied by the number of paralegals available can be augmented by upgrades to the Law Library and through upgrades purchasable with Reputation Points at the beginning of a run.

The player cannot hire paralegals until they have purchased the Paralegal Desks upgrade in the Law Library.

By default, there can only be half as many paralegals as there are attorneys, but a reputation upgrade can change this.

Accountant

Accountants are the firm’s bookkeepers, who manage the company’s revenue, profit and loss, and tax compliance. Money made from successfully litigating cases cannot be spent until accountants have processed it - subtracting money from the pool to pay various state and federal corporation taxes - so the more accountants the firm hires, the faster revenue can be turned into spendable cash.

Facilities

Introduction

Facilities are rooms and, occasionally, buildings the firm can construct to improve the firm’s overall performance. Some facilities are optional, but beneficial while others, such as the law library and the accountancy department, are necessary to hire attorneys and accountants.

Facilities also unlock certain upgrade trees.

The full list of facilities the player can purchase are listed below:

Office

The office is the building the firm's facilities go into. It is, itself, a facility, in that it can be purchased in the same way as others, but no other facilities can be bought until the office has been purchased.

Buying the office means the player ceases to be a solo practitioner and starts to be the CEO of a law firm. At this point, the player is prompted to name their firm.

The office has a room for the CEO, which is where other facility purchase orders are issued from. The player can also use the office to set policies, or to resign.

Upgrades linked to the Office are:

Upgrade name	Upgrade requirement	Description
Buy Every Other Law Firm	\$1tn	By purchasing this upgrade, the player marshals all of their financial resources to purchase every other law firm operating in the United States, creating an effective monopoly and becoming the most powerful lawyer in the nation.
Buy The Antitrust Division	\$2tn	By purchasing this upgrade, the player marshals all of their financial resources to buy out the Antitrust Division of the Department of Justice, clearing the way for their purchase of every other national law firm.
Executive Suite Recognition	\$X	Executive Suite Recognition for the CEO is rare, given the CEO is effectively the sole director of the firm. Given this rarity, a glowing circle will appear one in 200 times per five seconds, and never in conjunction with another ESR circle in another department. Clicking the circle causes player-directed litigation and accountancy to be 200x more efficient for fifteen seconds.

Law library

The law library is where the firm's attorneys go to perform legal research. Purchasing the law library in the first instance allows the player to hire attorneys other than themselves, while upgrading it increases the total number of attorneys the player can have at one time.

The cost to upgrade the law library increases exponentially, in-line with the player's expected revenue.

Upgrades linked to the law library are:

Upgrade name	Upgrade requirement	Description
Tier 1 cases	Purchase the Law Library	These are your traffic violations, parking tickets, minor civil disputes and so on; basic fare.
Tier 2 cases	\$X (requires ten attorneys)	These are more complex cases, requiring more staff - more serious civil disputes, minor criminal charges. Revenue from litigation increases. The cap on attorneys increases to 20.
Tier 3 cases	\$X (requires twenty attorneys and for Tier 2 cases to be unlocked)	These are even more complex cases, requiring more staff - intercompany disputes, data protection cases, and other, more serious criminal litigation. Revenue from litigation increases. The cap on attorneys increases to 40.
Tier 4 cases	\$X (requires forty attorneys and for Tier 3 cases to be unlocked)	This is the juncture where the firm becomes significant - these are major intercompany disputes, taking cases of people suing the government, capital crimes. The cap on attorneys increases to sixty.
Tier 5 cases	\$X (requires sixty attorneys and for Tier 4 cases to be unlocked)	These are cases plead before the Supreme Court, and are the highest level

		litigation the firm can perform. The attorney cap is removed.
Paralegal Desks	\$X (requires ten attorneys)	With the attorneys' increased workload, they could use assistance. Buying and arranging desks to accommodate new staff enables the company to hire paralegals to provide assistance.
More Paralegal Desks	\$X (Requires ten paralegals to be hired)	The law library is a bit cramped with all the attorneys and paralegals running around. Buying and arranging more desks to accommodate the influx of staff will make it easier for paralegals to do their job, and add 20% to the multiplier they give to revenue generated by attorneys.
Generative AI Research	\$X	Purchasing this upgrade unlocks the Generative AI policy.
Executive Suite Recognition	\$X	Purchasing this upgrade causes a glowing circle to occasionally appear over the attorneys' department. It will stay for a short period of time, then disappear. If the player clicks it, the department operates at double efficiency for ten seconds. An ESR circle will not exist at the same time as an ESR circle in another department. This efficiency doubling affects attorney output only; the force multiplier provided by paralegals is the same.

Accountancy department

The accountancy department is where the firm's accountants work. Purchasing the accountancy department in the first instance allows the player to hire accountants other than

themselves, while upgrading it increases the total number of accountants the player can have at one time.

Upgrades linked to the accountancy department are:

Upgrade name	Upgrade requirement	Description
Better Hardware	\$X (increases every purchase)	Giving the accountants faster computers that freeze less often increases the speed with which they process the books.
Look The Other Way	\$X (increases every purchase)	Hiring unscrupulous accountants willing to shave a little off here and there, or report more expenses than actually got spent, reduces the firm's tax outlay by 1.25%. This upgrade can be repeated for a maximum of 5%.
Executive Suite Recognition	\$X	Purchasing this upgrade causes a glowing circle to occasionally appear over the accountants' department. It will stay for a short period of time, then disappear. If the player clicks it, the department operates at double efficiency for ten seconds. An ESR circle will not exist at the same time as an ESR circle in another department.

PR department

The PR department is staffed by the firm's spin doctors, who manage the firm's public image. The PR department is not staffed by employees the player hires, but is required before the player can buy certain upgrades.

The primary function of the PR department is two-fold: to protect the firm from bad press (mostly brought about by scandals, or disastrously unsuccessful litigation) and to lobby government to reduce the company's tax outlay.

Upgrades linked to the PR department are:

Upgrade name	Upgrade requirement	Description
Buy Lobbyists	\$X (increases every purchase)	The firm hires a team of expert lobbyists to generate loopholes and tax rebates for the company at the state capitol. Every purchase lowers the company's tax outlay by 1% (for a maximum of 5%).
Press Strategist	\$X	Purchasing this upgrade enables the player to set a Press Communication policy.
Slow-walk the Antitrust Division	\$X (increases every purchase)	The firm spends a lot of time and money making discovery by the Antitrust Division as slow and frustrating as possible, buying extra time to stop their investigation.

HR department

The HR department is not staffed by employees the player hires, but is required before the player can buy certain upgrades.

Upgrades linked to the HR department are:

Upgrade name	Upgrade requirement	Description
Remote Work	\$X	Purchasing this upgrade enables the player to set a Work-from-home policy.
Medical Insurance	\$X	Purchasing this upgrade means the firm will start paying for its people's medical insurance. This will encourage higher calibre staff to join, making the firm's accountants and attorneys more effective. Access to healthcare also slows the rate at which fatigue generates during normal and crunch work to 85% of its usual value.

Continuing Professional Development	\$X	Purchasing this upgrade means the firm will start paying for its employees continuing professional development, making its employees over time more qualified. A CPD bar appears over the HR department; when it fills, revenue is multiplied by 1.5x for thirty seconds.
First Aid Team	\$X	Once hired, the first aid team in HR will warn the player if a department is about to become fatigued, allowing them to take action.

Shell Corporation

The shell corporation is a separate building. It is not staffed, and exists primarily as a legal fiction by which the firm can file bogus lawsuits against its competition to syphon their funds.

The shell corporation can only be built once the Shell Corporation upgrade has been purchased from the Reputation Point upgrade pool. Building a shell corporation allows the player to sue other players and steal their funds.

Policies

Introduction

Policies are the rules of the company, and set how employees at the company should work. Changes to the firm's policies alter how effective different departments are. The firm's policies are set in the Office by the CEO.

The full list of policies the player can set are listed below:

Work-from-home policy

This policy is unlocked by purchasing the remote work upgrade at the HR department. Unlocking this policy allows the player to choose between "In-office" and "Remote" methods of operating the firm. Each policy setting has advantages and disadvantages:

- In-office: This is the default setting. Bringing employees into the office costs more; the firm covers their commuter costs and must pay them more to justify requiring them to be in person. However, being in the office gives attorneys access to the law library, which makes them more effective.

- Remote: Giving employees the choice to work from home means that employees can come to the office if they wish, but may work from home if they prefer. The firm will pay less in commuter and operating costs; however, working from home makes accessing the law library's resources more complicated, making attorneys less effective. (Operating costs: 0.75x; litigation success rate: 0.85x).

Press Communication policy

This policy is unlocked by purchasing the press strategist at the PR department. Unlocking this policy allows the player to choose between "Talk to Press" and "Refer to Management" methods of dealing with the press during high profile cases. Each policy setting has advantages and disadvantages:

- Refer to Management: This is the default setting. When asked questions about ongoing litigation, attorneys will refer journalists to the company's press office.
- Talk to Press: Attorneys will actively give comments to the media about ongoing litigation when asked. This raises the company's profile, but can backfire if one of your litigators says something stupid. (Chance of scandal: 1.08x; case revenue: 1.1x)

Generative AI policy

This policy is unlocked by purchasing the Generative AI upgrade at the law library. Unlocking this policy allows the player to choose between a "Generative AI use permitted" and "Generative AI use banned" approach to the use of genAI in legal research. The policy settings are as follows:

- Generative AI use banned: This is the default setting. Attorneys and paralegals may not use generative AI to perform legal research.
- Generative AI use permitted: Attorneys and paralegals may use generative AI to perform legal research. This will lead to research full of AI hallucinations and general nonsense, raising the chance that the law firm will be sanctioned. (Chance of scandal: 3x; case revenue: 0.8x).

Events

Introduction

Events are external impacts on the firm's revenue stream and activity not actively caused by the player. This includes scandals resulting from the firm's attorneys' poor lawyering.

Scandal

Scandals result when the firm's lawyers engage in extremely poor lawyering (for instance: the use of generative AI such as ChatGPT to perform legal research).

When a scandal occurs, the firm's reputation is impacted and revenue goes down by 15% (to begin with - this can be changed through purchasing upgrades). After a little while, the effect of the scandal subsides.

Election

Elections occur every once in a while, and the government changes. The player can choose a party to vote for, and the policy of the party that gets elected affects the firm's tax outlay:

Election result	Effect
Status quo party	No change
Party campaigning on improving public services wins	Tax outlay increases by 5%; cost of new employees decreases by 10%.
Party campaigning on lower taxes wins	Tax outlay decreases by 3%; cost of new employees increases by 10%.

Election-related changes end after one minute. The length of time election-related changes last, as well as their potency, can be altered by upgrades.

Currencies

Introduction

A "currency" in this project is anything that can be spent to purchase something. The full list of currencies are listed below:

Money (and Revenue)

Money (\$) is made by successfully litigating cases. Money can be spent to hire new employees and purchase facilities.

Revenue is the gross cash that the firm takes for completing cases. This is the full amount the firm receives before tax and other deductions. Revenue cannot be spent, but can be converted into spendable Money after it is put through the accounting process.

Revenue becomes money after the following deductions:

- Payment of operating costs 20% (reducible through certain upgrades, skipped if office not purchased);
- Tax of 15% on remaining (reducible through certain upgrades);
- 5% reserved as bonuses for staff (skipped if the litigator is the player, reducible through certain upgrades).

As a result, revenue is calculated, per tick, using the function

$$(X - * 0.8) * 0.85) * 0.95 = Y$$

where X = revenue based on what tier of cases attorneys are tackling, and Y is Money added to spendable balance.

Employees

Employees are the life force of the firm. The player can spend Money to hire Employees, who they can then place in any department of their choosing. The cost to hire Employees increases as more Employees are hired.

Reputation Points (RP)

Reputation Points (RP) represent the player's individual reputation as a lawyer and business owner. When the player resigns as CEO of their law firm, their progress is wiped and the highest amount of money held by the player at one time during their run is converted into RP. When starting again, the player can spend RP to obtain more powerful upgrades to improve their run.

Reputation upgrades

Introduction

Reputation upgrades are upgrades to the player's run that can be purchased with Reputation Points (RP). At the end of a run, when the player resigns, their highest money balance is converted into RP, which they can spend at the start of their next run. The player cannot resign as a solo practitioner.

At the beginning of every run, the player can reassign the RP they have assigned, removing RP from some upgrades to move them to others. If an upgrade that has its RP removed is a dependency of another upgrade, then they also get back the RP for the dependent upgrade.

Upgrades

The following upgrades can be purchased with RP:

Accountancy upgrades

Upgrade name	Upgrade requirement	Description
High-Speed Internet	4 RP	Supplying high speed internet to accountants enables them to get access to the company's shared hard drive faster and easier, making accountants 10% more efficient and lowering the rate at which fatigue accrues by 10%.
Quantum Spreadsheets	6 RP (Requires High-Speed Internet)	Applying the principles of quantum science to the company's spreadsheet management enables the company's accountants to handle twice as many dollars per dollar, doubling the speed with which books are processed.
Gold Stars	6 RP (Requires High-Speed Internet)	Accountants are more personally affected by the executive suite's recognition of their hard work. The effects of ESR now last 1.5x as long.

Attorney upgrades

Upgrade name	Upgrade requirement	Upgrade description
Coffee Machines	2 RP	Adding coffee machines to the office enables your attorneys to work later into the night, delivering more litigation per day than they would otherwise. This increases the speed with which they complete cases by 1.35x, but the health issues associated with massive caffeine intake also increase the speed at which fatigue accrues by 12.5%.
Gold Stars	6 RP (Requires Coffee Machines)	Attorneys are more personally affected by the

		executive suite's recognition of their hard work. The effects of ESR now last 1.5x as long.
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Paralegal upgrades

Upgrade name	Upgrade requirement	Upgrade description
Even More Paralegal Desks	2 RP (must have bought More Paralegal Desks in at least one run)	The office is getting very crowded indeed. By purchasing and arranging even more desks, the player can now have as many paralegals as they have attorneys.
Paralegal Desks on Paralegal Desks	10 RP (Requires Even More Paralegal Desks)	Through the innovation of putting paralegal desks on top of each other, there is now enough space to accommodate a functionally infinite number of paralegals. There is no longer any restriction on the number of paralegals the player can hire.

Other upgrades

Six Sigma Tutorial	4 RP (must have bought Continuing Professional Development in at least one run)	By synergising business practices, the effect of Continuing Professional Development is more powerful and lasts longer. (Increases to 2x revenue, for 45 seconds). It also reduces the impact of scandals by 5% and the chance of scandals occurring by 20%.
Shell Corporation	6 RP	By establishing a shell corporation, the firm can file bogus lawsuits against competitors to syphon their funds
Super PAC	6 RP	By establishing a political action committee, the firm

		can ensure the effects of government policy last longer, and its negative impacts are partially mitigated.
First Aid Team: First Strike Protocol	6 RP (must have bought First Aid Team in at least one run)	Once purchased, the First Aid Team will automatically intervene (First Strike Protocol) to lower the work intensity rate of a department once their fatigue level gets to a dangerous point. The player can set the percentage threshold at which the First Strike Protocol triggers, as well as what intensity the team should set the department to once it does.

Post-game

Description

The post-game is the gameplay after the player completes the game's primary objective of making one trillion dollars and buying the nation's entire legal industry.

When the player attempts this, the purchase is put on hold while the antitrust division of the US Department of Justice investigates. The player must then make two trillion dollars to buy out the antitrust division and reinstate the purchase.

They are, however, time-limited; they have three real-world hours to come up with the money before the purchase is rejected and they have to start over. Those hours do not tick while the game is closed; they only tick as long as the game is open. This means the player can go away and come back without jeopardising their run.

If the player fails, they are refunded 10% of the original purchase price of every national law firm (\$100bn).

If the player succeeds, they get the "Deregulated" achievement and have won the game.

Achievements

Introduction

The player can earn achievements for completing certain tasks within the scope of the game.

Below is a list of all achievements the player can get:

Achievement name	Achievement requirements
	Name the law firm during the first run
	Make a million dollars for the first time
	Make a billion dollars for the first time
	Make a trillion dollars for the first time
Deregulated	Make two trillion dollars for the first time and successfully defeat the antitrust investigation
My Work Here Is Done	Resign as CEO of a law firm, earning at least one Reputation Point
Serial Quitter	Buy all available Reputation Point upgrades
SLAPPED	Successfully file a bogus lawsuit against another player, stealing their money
To The Bone	Cause a department to become fatigued for the first time
Gold Star	Successfully trigger Executive Suite Recognition for the first time