



# LAWYERS ON FIRE

**Lawyers on Fire:** Hello this is Lawyers on Fire. We are in San Francisco today talking to Leila Banijamali... – did I say this correctly? –

**Leila Banijamali:** Yes.

**Lawyers on Fire:** ...who is a young, successful – I would say – entrepreneur here in the Silicon Valley environment. She just came of a panel where she introduced her company to some judges like in a dragon's den and I was so inspired that I asked her for an interview. So we are very happy that you are with us today Leila.

**Leila Banijamali:** Thanks, I am happy to be here.

**Lawyers on Fire:** Thanks. Can you tell us a bit about how you came into this startup environment? You are a lawyer but entrepreneur as well?

**Leila Banijamali:** Yeah that's right. First of all thanks so much for this interview it's really always exciting to sort of share my story and to hear from other entrepreneurs. So I started Startup Documents that actually was birthed from my work at Bedrock which is my law firm and Bedrock essentially has represented hundreds and hundreds of technology companies and startups and from that we realized that there is a part of our process that we can automate. So we did exactly that, we launched it first to our clients. So our law firm created software for our client to automate a very particular thing and that was the formation of companies and a generation of legal documents specifically for startup companies. Then we saw that it was extremely successful and we decided to open it to the public.

**Lawyers on Fire:** What was your main idea before you started? Why did you what you did – was this a hobby or did you get sponsorship internally to do this from your firm?



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**Leila Banijamali:** No. I am the managing director of the firm and I still am so it was pretty much my decision and I decided that I wanted to provide our clients with software. There was no reason for us to engage in archaic traditional legal services for certain things that we are providing, it made a lot more sense to automate those things for the benefit of our clients and because it's so important for us to empathize with our clients that we decided to launch this software.

**Lawyers on Fire:** Can you give us an example, you know, as a client what type of product do you actually have out there?

**Leila Banijamali:** Sure, so when an entrepreneur wants to launch a company whether they are in the Germany or in the United States or anywhere in the world and they want to launch a U.S company because they want to have access to U.S funding VC's or if they want to get some kind of citizenship or residency in the United States, people come to our website <http://startupdocuments.com> and they form a company. The companies are formed within a couple of days. It's all automated, they get notified by email as soon as the formation is finished. And they can log back on the platform and generate other auxiliary documents as well to support the growth of their ventures.

**Lawyers on Fire:** Do you think this automation thing will cannibalize in any way your legal services? Will there be less legal services afterwards or what you think is the impact of this new service you're offering?

**Leila Banijamali:** Yeah I don't think at all that the software we're creating will cannibalize our law firm legal services or providing. I think, as I mentioned on the panel, we haven't since we released the software – the site, as the software services are cloud-based – we haven't fired or let go any lawyers of our firm. In fact, we have hired software engineers. We have hired designers and I think that there is a lot more room if our company was much bigger you know we are only 5 lawyers but if we had a very large law firm we may even want to hire data



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scientists and lots of other roles will be created. So I think that with these legal technologist positions, there is lots of potential for growth. And it doesn't mean that we are going to eliminate the jobs. The great thing about legal tech is it's going to create new jobs in our industry.

**Lawyers on Fire:** You work a lot also with your new platform with startups – so is it actually focused on startups?

**Leila Banijamali:** It is yes it is focused on startups.

**Lawyers on Fire:** What do you think looking around? How would you classify what's up and going on? We heard a lot about artificial intelligence. We heard about data science, machine learning. How would you describe the current environment here in California?

**Leila Banijamali:** Yes, so I think for legal tech, a lot of people are still focused on document assembly. Some people are focused on data, some people are focused on ads, though less so I think, that was more few years ago. You know but I think people are focused on cloud; security is certainly a big topic. Outside of the legal sphere definitely a lot of AI, virtual reality happening and I want to see more of that in the legal tech world because I think right now with legal tech we are making incremental improvements. We are not taking – there's not a lot of companies taking really really big risks is my point. We need to be able to do that because we are in fact capable of incorporating AI or virtual reality into a lot of what we do and we should be thinking about how to do that.

**Lawyers on Fire:** Cool. What are you doing if you don't think about law and legal technology? What's the drive? I just want to find out why you are so inspired and passionately into this legal tech thing?

**Leila Banijamali:** Well I think there are a lot of people out there who have a need for great service. Who have really great ideas and there is a lot of entrepreneurs



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that need help launching and I think there is a need to help these people launch great companies. I think the solutions that are currently provided by ways of, by means of for example traditional legal services is just not good enough. Is not the right fit for a very small startup company to work with a very large firm. No matter what the creative fee arrangement is, large firms are not setup to support small business.

**Lawyers on Fire:** Thank you very much Leila for talking to us today.

**Leila Banijamali:** You welcome. Thanks for having me.