

BowTieLawyer

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How to Hire an Attorney.

One of the most daunting tasks in a legal situation is hiring an attorney. It is not something you ever look forward to doing, regardless of the reason for why you need an attorney. But, there are several things you should do before contacting an attorney and several things you should do afterwards.



Pre-Attorney check:

- **Ask your Family.** It is likely someone in your family, or a close friend, has been through the need for an attorney and used one. This will help you determine who to use and just as importantly who NOT to use.
- **Ask your Preacher.** Your preacher, pastor, rabbi, etc... may well know who can help you. Sometimes they are reluctant to get involved as it may pit one parishioner vs. another, however, in my experience they try to steer either one or both to someone equipped to help that particular person.
- **Ask Trusted Professionals.** Your CPA, Banker, Counselor. They know who has a good reputation in the community and in some instances may have worked with the attorney.
- **Review the Web.** Do they have a web presence? Review their site for content? Review for practice areas; Jack of all trades or limiting their practice?

Interview the Attorney:

- **The Initial Assessment** (or consultation, as some attorneys call it) is as much you gathering information on the attorney as the attorney is getting information on, about and from you.
- **Ask about Experience;** trial experience, experience in the area of law you seek, experience with the potential judges and counsel-opposite(s). This is not to say that older is better, but it is a fair question. (I am still relatively young- 7+ years of practice, I am losing my hair though, and have been around the block)
- **Explain.** See if they can explain the process in English. I know some big words, but I also know when to use them.
- **Ask about Fees.** Know what a “Retainer” is. (Unearned money which the attorney earns as

they work on your case. Typically you are billed for every phone call, email, text, letter, appointment, interview and court appearance). I charge differently and use almost exclusively “Flat Fees.” I try to tell you on the front end what it will take. Also, a “Retainer” is not necessarily what your case will cost. The attorney should not be sheepish about admitting this.

- **Trust your gut.** Instinct matters. If you don’t click, don’t have that trust – move on. There are a lot of attorneys out there.
- **Be smart about it too.** If the attorney can explain it, has the experience and is in your budget, don’t delay taking action, sometimes you have to make the best decision, on the best information available at the time. (Maybe your gut is wrong....)
- **Be Honest** with them. Every dirty detail.

After the Hire:

- **Be clear on Expectations.**
- **Communicate,** Communicate, Communicate. (Phone, text, email, as needed)
- **Follow their advice.** That is why you hired them.
- **Give feedback.**

This is not a perfect list, but it is some food for thought when hiring an attorney .

What else do you look for or want to know about hiring an attorney? Comment or email me!

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