

10 Insights Into What Today's Legal Consumer Wants ~ Part 2



More Clients • Better Results • Increased Profits

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The legal marketplace is noisier and more crowded today than ever before. Many attorneys are competing for the same clients and the same business. To rise above the noise and the competition, you can't play the game the same old way. You must evolve, or you'll perish. You either adapt, or you become obsolete.

Today's savvy legal consumers don't need attorneys the way they used to because they don't buy legal services the way they used to. The consumer is smarter and more demanding and has more options than ever before. They have evolved, and now it is your turn to modernize your approach, discover what works, and discard what does not when it comes to client conversion.

Consultations make or break everything in your practice. Every consultation presents an opportunity to win the business or send it to the competition.

Many attorneys are shocked to find out that they are regularly saying and doing things in their initial consultations that clash with how human beings are wired to be influenced. Most attorneys believe that they have a solid understanding of how the legal consumer hires attorneys these days. Attorneys are convinced that when they sit down to meet with a prospect, they have all the skills they need to convert them into a paying client. The reality is that a number of attorneys are using outdated techniques and communication skills that are no longer effective with today's Internet-empowered consumer.

Are you a progressive attorney, or are you clinging to yesteryear?

In [Part 1](#) of this article, I shared the first five insights that my extensive research revealed into the mind of the new legal consumer and what you can do to win more business. Legal consumers frankly communicated their likes and dislikes as they navigated the process of buying legal services and retaining an attorney.

Below are the second five insights into the wants and needs of the consumer when they meet with an attorney.

6. Show me the value in your services, and I will care less about your fees: Value is the difference between the fees you charge and the benefits that the prospective client perceives they will receive. Often the lack of perceived value makes clients shop price only. Your fees may be the only difference that clients may easily see and measure. You may be the best at what you do, but if you fail to sufficiently convey your value in a compelling and precise way, you will continue to lose to an attorney who charges less than you do. When you neglect to create value, you will land head first in the commodity trap.

7. I will tune out if you talk about yourself first: In the first few moments of meeting you, the prospect does not care about you yet. Many attorneys drive ideal clients away by talking about themselves first. They feel obliged to demonstrate how clever and experienced they are by talking about themselves. Encourage the client to talk first, and take the spotlight off of yourself. Promoting conversation on the part of the client does not mean asking, *What brings you in today?* or *How may I help you?*

Those questions will likely irritate clients. First, you should know why they are there. Second, why ask the same predictable questions that are posed when you walk into Home Depot?

I see attorneys do this every day when I assess and observe initial meetings and conduct mock consultations. The legal consumer says, *I don't care how long you've been practicing or about all the other people you've helped. I care about myself, my issues, and solving my problems. You can talk about yourself later in the conversation, after you have showed me that you care about me.*

8. Don't make the money conversation uncomfortable: Acting weird when discussing your fees with a prospective client put doubts in their mind and raises suspicion. The legal consumer says, *If my attorney is uneasy discussing money, I know that I will be uneasy about giving him any of my hard-earned money. Please tell me in plain and simple language what's involved.*

The prospect wants you to put her at ease by confidently clarifying the rules of engagement, how fees are paid, how the money will be used, and what happens if invoices are outstanding. Look her in the eye, and don't choke or change your demeanor when discussing fees. She is watching.

9. If want my business, ask me for my business: It is your job to ask for the business. Not asking for the business, especially if someone is a good prospect, is awkward. People don't always come out and state, *Sounds good, let's get started.* or

Who do I make the retainer check out to? Asking for the business is like running to first base after hitting a line drive. It's expected. If you don't ask the question and make the move, you send a message to the client that you don't want or need his business or that you are apprehensive in asking for it.

10. Reinforce my wise decision to retain you: When the legal consumer finally makes her decision and hires you, she wants you to say something that makes her feel like she made the right choice. Don't say, *Okay, let me bring in the paralegal so that we may get started.* or *Great, I am looking forward to working with you.*

Instead say, *Diane, thank you for trusting me to help you with your legal situation. Since your court date for your DUI is in two weeks, let's finalize some paperwork and talk about what we will need to get accomplished in the next 24 to 48 hours.*

It is up to you to raise the bar of excellence.

You have plenty of insight into the mind of the consumer to give them what they want.

To acquire new clients you need modern skills. Old skills won't produce rock star rainmaking results. Much of the advice out there for attorneys about practice-building and client and business development no longer works. That information was conceived in a different time, in a different economy, and for a different consumer.

If you want the future to be better than the present, you must take action now and move in the same direction as the new consumer. Let your competition look like they got stuck in the 80s while you get noticed and you get hired.

Think about how much money you lost this year because your approach is not aligned with today's consumer, maybe tens of thousands, perhaps more. Creating a stream of clients and closing more business will take putting some skin in the game and making the necessary changes to your consultation approach.

Read Part 1 [here](#).

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