



I find myself being impacted by the weather, almost as bears are. As it turns cooler ... and today raining quite a bit (fireplace weather), I'm a bit lethargic. As the song says, "... for everything, there is a season..." So, perhaps this is the season to regroup, re-gather one's energy, enjoy the upcoming holidays and re-connect with family and friends.

From us at LawBiz® Management, have a great and safe Thanksgiving holiday. Enjoy your family and friends and the wonderful holiday food!

Our Twitter page was just honored with being included among the top 50 sites in the legal world. Thank you to all who made this possible.

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How Can You Lay the Foundation for an Engagement Agreement?

Set a Price on the Work

An engagement requires setting a price on the work. A prospective client will want to know how much will be needed to achieve the desired result. Every lawyer must consider three issues to address this question. First, will you be able to achieve the goals of the client? Second, will you be able to improve the client's condition? In other words, will the client see the value of the service? These two elements are within the lawyer's control.

Can the Client Afford the Engagement?

The third issue requires an evaluation of whether the client can and wants to afford the engagement. Some will say that there is always money available if we can demonstrate the value to the client. Use of money is a matter of priority only. That leaves the issue of engagement in our control. If we can only demonstrate sufficient improvement (value) to the client, we will be engaged.

Featured Video:



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Get a Signed Fee Agreement

However, do not leave this to chance. Due diligence on the client's willingness and ability to pay should be documented in the initial engagement agreement. Due diligence investigation is a step that too many lawyers neglect, and can be as simple as requesting a credit report from one of the consumer credit agencies or from a business credit reporter like Dun & Bradstreet. Or, we can ask for a financial statement from the client, or some other evidence of ability to pay. Once it is clear that prospective clients can pay, a signed engagement stating the terms and responsibilities for payment attests their initial assertion that they will pay. Clients who cannot or will not sign a fee agreement or pay a retainer, or who want to start now and pay later, should all be suspect.

Find Your Target Audience

Ability to pay is not the only factor, however, for a good engagement. Lawyers should properly define and identify the people who can best understand and use their service. The way to do so is to focus on the demographics, occupation, location, financials and other characteristics of clients who will give you the work that you want. You thus define what your practice really is (or should be) and who best can use your services. Learn where to find your target market and let prospects know that you can provide what they need. Use approaches consistent with your comfort zone, your creativity, your availability and your budget.

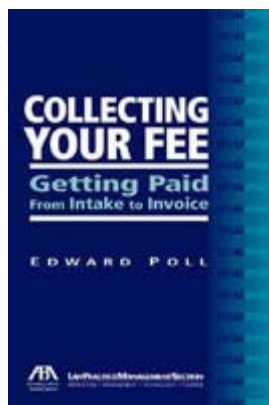
The Basics for a Successful Engagement

If you can put yourself in front of the people who need you the most, who have the money to improve their condition and are ready to sign the engagement agreement, you will have laid a foundation that increases your personal satisfaction and your revenue dramatically by focusing your efforts on clients who will pay you appropriately for the value you provide.

Collecting Your Fee: Getting Paid, From Intake to Invoice

"Ed Poll has done it again. He's created a down-to-earth guide for lawyers to collect their unpaid bills. The book is full of practical advice such as 'if you don't create a collection policy, your clients will create one for you.'"

The book offers lots of good advice on engagement letters, detailed bills, fee agreements, and intake forms. Plus it's loaded with useful forms. The CD contains forms for status reports, budgets, sample bills, collection letters. [Learn more.](#)



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What Clients Are Saying:

"I worked with Ed for a year while working to become a partner in my law firm. With Ed's coaching, I was able to achieve that goal at the end of the year. Through his coaching techniques, Ed showed me how to communicate assertively and confidently with the partners I needed to persuade to vote for my promotion into the partnership and to convince them of my abilities. I can honestly say that without Ed's help, I would not have made such an excellent impression on my partners."

KR

"I'm gradually learning, through my weekly coaching sessions, how to get in touch with what I like to think of as my 'inner Ed.' With 'Ed in my head' between coaching sessions, I have been able to negotiate better fees and attract more work and a higher quality clientele. With Ed as my ally, the stress of being a sole practitioner is greatly reduced."

**AS
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