

VALUE VERSUS COST

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It is a reality of life that people consider cost when purchasing products and services. The age old problem has been determining whether you are getting value for the price that you pay. This is especially true when you are purchasing legal services because it is difficult to compare such services. One certainty is that comparisons cannot be made on the basis of price alone for several reasons. First, most lawyers bill based on an hourly rate. It would seem that the lower the hourly rate the less the overall cost would be, but that often is not the case. A more experienced lawyer may be able to perform a task in less time or may know that a task is not even necessary. Additionally, some bargain lawyers charge extra amounts for services that actually are included in what appeared to be the higher priced lawyer's fees, thus increasing the rates to points that may even exceed the "higher" rates.

There can be no debate about the value of receiving correct and competent legal advice and representation. Unfortunately, true competence rarely is found in someone without experience. There is no shortage of choices of lawyers, and for simple matters, you may be content to have a relatively inexperienced practitioner handle your case, but if your future is on the line, you should think twice.

To get the value for your money, look to see whether the lawyer has experience and expertise in handling this type of case (you do not want a "general practitioner"); whether your case will be handled by the lawyer you hired or whether it will be doled out to someone else; whether your lawyer is respected by the local judges and lawyers in the area and whether you can relate to and communicate with that lawyer.