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When Does it Make Sense to Hire a Consultant for Witness Preparation?

Contrary to popular belief, it's not just big insurance companies and corporations with deep pockets who can benefit by hiring a trial consultant. A good consultant can help improve almost any "difficult" witness -- even on small cases, with limited budgets. Even if you plan to settle your case, a strong deposition can force the other side's hand in the desired direction, while ineffective testimony can produce the opposite effect.

Most attorneys, at some point in their career, have been dealt a key witness who seems to be incapable of taking direction. The witness wanders outside the boundaries of their prescribed testimony, refuses to pause long enough to allow for objections, or insists on being defensive. They may be overly apologetic, anxious, and insecure, or arrogant, uncontrollable and narcissistic. Either way, these witnesses not only stretch the limits of likeability, they cause an enormous amount of frustration. Worst of all, they can seriously jeopardize an otherwise strong case.

If you're looking to maximize a witness's effectiveness, consider hiring a trained consultant, even if for just half a day.

Look for a consultant who utilizes a holistic approach; one who's educated in psychological assessment, anxiety management and communication strategy. The consultant will work alongside the attorney, while maintaining the freedom to act as a "neutral" third-party. He or she will often be able to produce not only a dramatic improvement in the witness's confidence and credibility, but also an improvement in the attorney's relationship with the witness.

Attorneys who specialize in Employment Discrimination and Wrongful Termination, Family Law attorneys whose clients must testify in custody hearings, Plaintiff Attorneys who litigate Personal Injury cases and Criminal Defense attorneys can all benefit by hiring an experienced consultant for witness preparation.

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