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Webinar Process

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- All attendees will be muted during the presentation.
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 - Unmute your phone by pressing *6, or press the  icon on your computer.
 - Pose the question to the person you want.
 - Re mute your phone or computer after given the answer.

WELCOME TO THIS WEEKS PRESENTATION

Criteria for selecting an
attorney.

Presented by

Bob Adams

INTRODUCTION

You may never need an attorney, but when you do, YOU DO! Here is some practical information and suggestions for locating an attorney to assist you with some of life's trickiest moments.

What should I look for when choosing a lawyer?

The lawyer will be helping you solve your problems, so the first qualification is that you must feel comfortable enough to tell him or her, honestly and completely, all the facts necessary to resolve your problem.

No one you listen to and nothing you read will be able to guarantee that a particular lawyer will be the best for you;

you must judge that for yourself.



Are there any practical considerations to keep in mind when choosing a lawyer?

Yes, the lawyer's area of expertise and prior experience are important. Many states have specialization programs that certify lawyers as specialists in certain types of law. You may also wish to ask about the type of cases your lawyer generally handles. What is the breakdown of that lawyer's practice (e.g. 50 percent personal injury cases, 25 percent divorce cases and 25 percent "other.")

Keep in mind that most lawyers are not certified in a specialty, but that does not necessarily mean that a specific lawyer is not an expert in a specific field, particularly where a lawyer handles a high volume of cases in a particular practice area. Other considerations are the convenience of the lawyer's office location, fees charged, and the length of time a case may take.



Where should I start to look for a lawyer?

There are many ways to find a reliable lawyer. One of the best is a recommendation from a trusted friend, relative, or business associate.

Be aware, however, that each legal case is different and that a lawyer who is right for someone else may not suit you or your legal problem.



Are advertisements a good place to look for a lawyer?

In some ways, yes, ads are useful. However, always be careful about believing everything you read and hear—and nowhere is this truer than with advertisements. Newspaper, telephone directory, radio, television, and Internet ads, along with direct mail, can make you familiar with the names of lawyers who may be appropriate for your legal needs.

Some ads also will help you determine a lawyer's area of expertise. Other ads will quote a fee or price range for handling a specific type of "simple" case. Keep in mind that your case may not have a simple solution.

If a lawyer quotes a fee, be certain you know exactly what services and expenses the charge does and does not include.



What about a local referral service?

Most communities have referral services to help people find lawyers. You might be able to find them under “Lawyer Referral Service” or something similar in your yellow pages. These services usually recommend a lawyer in the area to evaluate a situation.

Several services offer help to groups with unique characteristics, such as the elderly, immigrants, victims of domestic violence, or persons with a disability.



What about a local referral service?

Bar associations in most communities make referrals according to specific areas of law, helping you find a lawyer with the right experience and practice concentration. Many referral services also have competency requirements for lawyers who wish to have referrals in a particular area of law.

You can find your local bar association in the phone book's white pages either under your community's name ("Centerville Bar Association") or under your county's name ("Cass County Bar Association").



What about a local referral service?

Still, these services are not a surefire way to find the best lawyer or the right lawyer for you. Some services make referrals without concern for the lawyer's type or level of experience.

You may want to seek out a lawyer referral service that participates in the American Bar Association-sponsored certification program, which uses a logo to identify lawyer referral programs that comply with certain quality standards developed by the ABA.



What about a prepaid legal services plan. What can I expect?

Legal services, like many other things, are often less expensive when bought in bulk. Some employers, labor and credit unions, and other groups have formed “legal insurance” plans. These plans vary. Many cover most, if not all, of the cost of legal consultations, document preparation, and court representation in routine legal matters. Other programs cover only advice and consultation with a lawyer.

Before joining a legal plan, make sure you are familiar with its coverage and know whether you will be required to make out-of-pocket contributions. These group plans follow the same pattern as group or cooperative medical insurance plans. Employers or unions set up a fund to pay the employees’ legal fees, with the employee sometimes contributing a small co-payment. Legal group plans have become much more widespread in recent years. Some retail department stores and credit card companies even offer such plans to their customers.



I want to hire a lawyer, but I do not have much money. Where can I find low-cost legal help?

Several legal assistance programs offer inexpensive or free legal services to those in need. Look in the yellow pages under topics such as “legal clinics,” “legal aid,” or “legal advice,” or search online.

Most legal aid programs have special guidelines for eligibility, often based on where you live, the size of your family, and your income. Some legal aid offices have their own staff lawyers, and others operate with volunteer lawyers. Note that people do not have a right to a free lawyer in civil legal matters.



I have been accused of a crime, and I cannot afford a lawyer. What can I do?

If you are accused of a crime, the U.S. Constitution guarantees you the right to be represented by a lawyer in any case in which you could be incarcerated for six months or more. State constitutions may guarantee your right to a lawyer for lesser crimes.

If you cannot afford a lawyer, either the judge hearing the case will appoint a private lawyer to represent you free of charge or the government's public defender will handle your case, also at no charge.



Besides court-appointed defenders, is there any other form of government assistance available?

Departments and agencies of both the state and federal governments often have staff lawyers who can help the general public in limited situations, without charge. Consider contacting the relevant federal agency if you have specific concerns, such as environmental protection problems or discrimination in employment or housing.



Besides court-appointed defenders, is there any other form of government assistance available?

Your State's Attorney General also may provide guidance to the public on state laws, without charge. Some states, for example, maintain consumer protection departments as a function of the Attorney General's office. Similarly, through their law departments, counties, cities, and townships often have government lawyers who may provide the public with guidance about local laws. Some of these local offices also offer consumer protection assistance. To find such agencies, check the government listings in your phone book or using your favorite search engine on the Internet.



What kind of an attorney will I need for a windfall gain?

Sudden and instant wealth opens a Pandora box of issues that deserve professional assistance. The primary considerations for the newly enriched may include:

- Tax Planning
- Asset Protection
- Estate Planning
- Trusts or Endowments
- Charitable Entity Creation
- Divorce. (Regrettably, money can influence family dynamics.)

Each of these considerations may require a different attorney to get the best service.



Choosing an attorney can seem frightening, BUT, they are marketing a public service, therefore they are in need of you as much as you are in need of them.

REMEMBER, they are just as interested in working with you, AS LONG AS IT IS IN THEIR AREA OF SPECIALITY OR INTEREST.

- Be concise about what your problem or desires are.
- ASK LOTS OF QUESTIONS.
- Be aware of their time. The first appointment is usually free, but there will be charges for any follow ups.
- Make sure you provide EVERYTHING they ask for. An attorney is only as good as the information he has from you and about the case.
- BE HONEST. REMEMBER, there is client/attorney privilege in this relationship. He can not share any other information about you or the case without your permission.

Are there links to services available on the internet?

Yes, and here are a few:

- This link provides a great resource for all different kinds of attorneys all over the nation. <https://www.lawyers.com>
- This is a wide spread organization that provides additional information and locations for attorneys. <https://www.americanbar.org/>

These links are available on the website under WEBINARS.



Questions and Answers

- Before we get started I want to remind you of the presentations on the website from our attorney, David Steffensen, discussing various topics that are applicable for our anticipated RV.
- To ask questions:
 - Unmute your phone by pressing *6, or press the  icon on your computer.
 - Pose the question to the person you want.
 - Re mute your phone or computer after given the answer.

The floor is now open for questions.

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