

## ATTRIBUTES TO LOOK FOR IN AN ATTORNEY

As the saying goes, you don't need an attorney until you need an attorney. Most people begin the search by asking friends and family for recommendations, which is always a good start. Reviewing online listings and reviews is also helpful. However, it's important to know what you are looking for. Consider the following points to make sure you are informed on the options available to you. Technology has transformed many industries, including legal case management. Harness the time and cost savings to make the most of your legal case budget.

### THE IMPORTANCE OF HIRING AN ATTORNEY

The legal process can be a long and arduous one. Hiring an attorney who fits your needs can save a lot of time, money and stress. The key to success is good research which often takes a lot of time. But if you look a bit further, you will find websites where all the information is gathered in one platform.

It is important to think about what you want in an attorney and which factors weigh more than others. For example, some people can afford to lighten the wallet on the top-rated attorney in the state while others would rather have budget-friendly services.

Whether determining property rights or filing a divorce, the same consideration points are important. As such, attorney research, price consideration, and reciprocal communication are three critical criteria for all cases. As a result, you will find the attorney that fits your specific needs and provides you with the representation you want.

### USE ONLINE RESOURCES FOR OPTIMAL RESEARCH

The internet provides a vast amount of resources to reduce the endless list of potential lawyers. Rather than just digging in, think about efficiency. Every time you communicate with a potential attorney, you have to retell the story. Why not skip that? Look for a platform where multiple attorneys can find out about your case and respond directly to you. Not only does that save you time, it also saves money.

Make sure you review your attorney's credentials. Make sure their degree is from a qualified law school and check with the state licensing authority to make sure they are in good standing. License status are usually found on the state bar association website. However, some states like Maine, Oklahoma, South Dakota and Delaware do not allow online research. For Maine, the American Bar Association (ABA) redirects to the Board of Overseers of the Bar. For Oklahoma, South Dakota and Delaware, a call or email is required to verify lawyer licensing. In Vermont, the ABA redirects to the Vermont Judiciary and the list of Attorneys in Good Standing.



When you review attorneys, be sure to check three specific items. First, find out if they have any disciplinary orders filed against them. These orders are issued when a state determines misconduct on the part of an attorney who is licensed by them. Second, find out if the attorney carries malpractice insurance. Finally, review their experience. There are four main types of law: criminal, civil, common, and statute. Within each of these are the more specific applications of law, such as family law, business law, real estate law, and much more. So as you decide who to engage, make sure their experience is in the area of law you need.

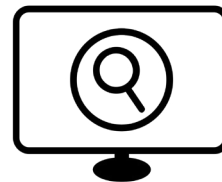
You can gather feedback from firsthand experience with an attorney. Online review sites, like Yelp and Google, are an outlet for an attorney's past and current clients to give feedback. Hearing about an attorney from people who have personally worked with them is a great way to learn more. However, not all online reviews are reliable, so take them with a grain of salt. Fake reviews can be spotted by searching for marketing speak, multiple identical reviews, and slams. Slams are negative reviews with no substance or details. So, give reviews a read. Know that most people are very quick to give negative feedback but if the experience was good, many people don't post feedback.

### CONSIDER COSTS

Hiring an attorney can be costly, especially for more complicated and time-extensive cases. Therefore, it is critical to consider the balance between cost and potential benefit. Set a tentative limit on how much to spend based on your budget and type of case. Keep in mind that case requirements may differ from your ideal budget.

A smaller issue that does not have high stakes also does not usually require hiring the most experienced, and therefore expensive, attorney. Remember to consider the costs of other services that may be required for the case such as filing fees and court costs. Paralegal services sound incremental but are actually a potential cost saver. Paralegals can complete many tasks, like completing paperwork and filing with courts at a lower rate under the supervision of an attorney.

### POINTS TO CONSIDER WHEN SELECTING AN ATTORNEY:



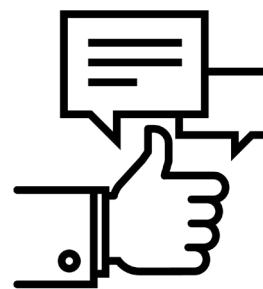
RESEARCH



COST



COMMUNICATION



GATHER INFORMATION BUT  
MAKE UP YOUR OWN MIND



Keep in mind that legal services require different methods of payment. A flat rate is a charge that remains constant, like paying exactly \$5,000 for a divorce. An hourly rate is a charge at a fixed rate, like \$100 per hour spent on the case. There are also contingency billing options where if the case is won, damages are split on a negotiable ratio and if no damages are won, the attorney gets nothing. Sometimes, clients can pay a combination of these kinds of payments for different services.

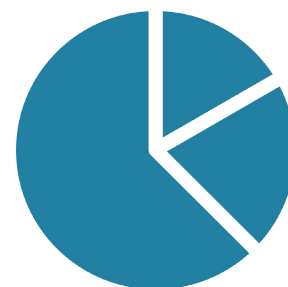
For example, an attorney can request a flat rate while paralegal services charge by the hour. An attorney that will work with you on how the case is billed is a good telltale sign that they are more client-driven. Many of these attorneys use legal technology platforms, like SimpleLaw, for easy payment through Paypal and other online processing solutions. With these legal technology platforms, clients can view the status of their case 24/7, with access to documents, case notes, upcoming court dates and more.

### COMMUNICATION IS KEY

After looking into the certifications and costs of potential attorneys, the next and probably most essential consideration is communication. How the lawyer communicates with you and guides you through the whole process will tell you a lot about the experience you will have. Communication and availability of an attorney is critical. Technology certainly assists with ensuring a transparent process. But there is sometimes no substitute for a phone call. So make sure you discuss availability with your potential attorney.

Look for attorneys that empower clients with round-the-clock access to notes, documents, budget and case status online. Every client wants to be as informed as quickly as possible about the status of their case. These features allow you to see what the attorney sees, giving unlimited clear and honest access to the materials being used and the work that is being done. It is important to feel confident with the person that will be leading his or her case to disclose everything for best results.

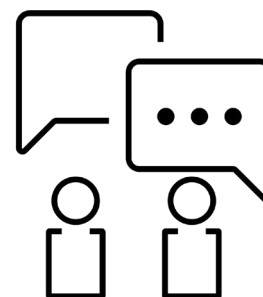
Check online reviews for mentions about empathy, honesty, and consideration for the clients' wishes. Get acquainted



*MANY TYPE OF COSTS  
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*CONSIDER OPTIONS FOR  
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SELECTING AN ATTORNEY*



with prospective attorneys by asking questions on interactive online forums and asking for references. Follow up with a quick email outlining any questions or open items shortly after your initial discussion. After contacting the attorney, primary consultations act as a preview of the experience with them throughout the whole process.

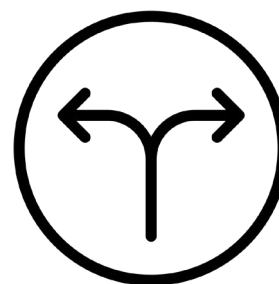
## **FIND YOUR ATTORNEY**

The choice of attorney can strongly influence your case. This is a serious decision to make that needs thoughtful deliberation. So, sufficient time in the research and evaluations of the attorneys is required. Use the resources at your fingertips while finding your attorney. The selection is not limited to a few personal recommendations anymore.

Resources such as forums, review sites, software platforms, and more can up your search game. Many of the choices out there can eliminate the duplication of providing the details of your potential case. Websites that provide this information deliver efficiency, cutting time on the research process. Knowing what is most important to you will help you find the right attorney.

## **SUMMARY**

Finding the right attorney for a specific case takes time, research and patience. Look beyond the obvious to ensure your research is thorough. Make the most of the online resources to find the right lawyer for you. Complete thorough research to ensure you understand budget, communication and legal standing. Knowing what is important to you, balancing the budget, and thoughtfully researching options are the key to success.



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