

“Lawyers -The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly”

Experiences of Paulsen's Perspectives Readers:

The Good:

Integrity - I picked a lawyer and the rest was magic. He took me under his wing, took late night calls, kept me informed and successfully won me a very handsome settlement. He said he occasionally finds a person who really needs him for his legal work but more important is to help them through a very frightening process. Since that time I know he has become a high profile lawyer but to me he was a very nice and kind man.

Professional Work Ethic – A customer sued my business and hired a lawyer who was a bulldog and very in your face, unprofessional and demeaning to us. The lawsuit was bogus but the customer had his lawyer use these unprofessional tactics with us. Based upon a recommendation, I hired a lawyer and was amazed at his skills; taking the time to dig into the details of why the claims made by the customer were bogus. He acted professionally at all times and the lawyer was able to understand and distill the reams of information into an organized and usable fashion. We won the case and I would recommend this lawyer to others.

The Bad:

Legal Knowledge - I began in business over 25 years ago joining a computer company in sales. The owner was an autocrat and very hard to work for and he began to act unethically with a few of the customers. I resigned and blew the whistle on him and sued him. I was counter sued for expense account fraud and that became the case due to the weakness of my legal team. My lawyers were weak on their knowledge of the law and the partner handed my case to a young lawyer on his team. The young lawyer was so weak he could not even depose my former co-workers with any competency. It turned out to be an abyss for me and I know that I would have won, but my lawyer could not compete. I had to settle because of my lawyer's inability to handle the matter and it still irks me.

Professional Ethics - Here is my disaster story and experience with a large law firm. I was forced to sue my former employer and was told that arbitration would be much cheaper than going to court. To get my business, the firm estimated it would not cost more than \$25,000. I was then presented a bill for almost three times that amount. I am still upset almost 2 years later.

The Ugly:

Business Acumen - My partners and I were closing on an acquisition of our new business. About 30 days before we closed, we met our lawyer and estimated what it would take to complete the transaction. Just before we closed, 30 days later, our total bill was double the estimate! We ended up negotiating a compromise, but 7 years later it is still remembered and I am dismayed by that lawyer's inability to provide a reasonable estimate range of his fees.

Client Relationship Skills - I was working with a large law firm and became concerned with the duplicative time entries I was receiving from multiple lawyers working on the same matter. I met with the billing partner to express my concerns and the following month I ended up getting an invoice from him for his meeting with me about the disputed bill. I ended up switching lawyers.

Client Relationship Focus - I was working with a large law firm on a case that claimed damages in the millions of dollars. It quickly became apparent that the case had no merit. However, it also quickly became apparent that the law firm could bill many hours on the matter and they did not aggressively attempt to resolve the case in my best interests. We are a large company and they needed to fill their billable hour pipeline. We eventually settled the case two years later as it had no merit, but it was after I spent hundreds of thousands of dollars. We decided not to use that law firm anymore.