

Seven Simple Client Retention Strategies that Every Law Firm Should Implement

What is client retention and why is it important? Client retention is the art of retaining your clients after services have been rendered. I call it an art because it truly does not come easily for many law firms. Instead, they suffer from high turnover or attrition rates where current clients become ex-clients who choose to secure legal services elsewhere.

Without client retention strategies, your firm is missing out on valuable profit opportunities. Not only may you lose current clients – but you also lose the potential for future work from repeat clients and community referrals. Client retention should be an integral part of your profit planning. Read on for seven simple tips to increase your client retention with ease.

Communicate

“My lawyer doesn’t call me back.” “I don’t know what’s happening with my case.” These are consistently some of the most common complaints that individuals make against law firms. They are also some of the most avoidable. Clients want to feel valued by their lawyers and one of the easiest ways to accomplish this goal is through communication.

Return telephone calls and emails in a timely fashion. If there is information that can be efficiently communicated by a member of your support staff, then delegate that task. If it’s something that requires your personal attention, take the time to make it happen. That doesn’t mean spending all day returning calls and emails. Set aside a specific time each day to make these communications. The sacrifice you make now can save a lot of stress

and heartache later on. Remember – you can communicate with your clients now, or answer to a bar complaint later.

Be honest

One of the hardest parts about providing public service is communicating news that the client really does not want to hear. Your clients have a lot at stake. They come to you for assistance during some of the most challenging times in their lives. As such, they only want to hear the news that is positive and beneficial to their interests. It's during these times, that honesty becomes even more essential.

Don't be tempted to give clients false hope. If their matter is not a slam dunk, tell them so right from the beginning. That way, they are prepared for the possibility of a negative outcome.

It's also important, to be honest with your clients about your firm's performance in their case. If one of your attorneys missed a deadline, it's probably best to admit to the mistake and take immediate corrective actions. Clients want truthfulness with their legal representation – even if their expectations are sometimes a bit unrealistic. Protect the integrity of your firm by making it a firm policy to always be honest.

Do the work

The most important aspect of legal representation is doing the actual work. You and your firm members must provide services that are effective and valuable, so your clients recognize your skill and want to come back for future legal needs. Calendar accurately and put a system in place that helps you meet all deadlines in a timely manner. Employ highly skilled attorneys and staff members whom you can count on to handle their cases appropriately.

Doing the work also involves staying informed about recent changes to the law and court decisions that are relevant to your practice areas. Maintain

your CLE certifications, and take proactive measures to increase your education and maintain your skills. With new technologies and innovations, the practice of law is constantly changing. Make an effort to keep up with the changes, so your firm can stay relevant and retain clients.

Bill accurately

Have you ever been overbilled for a service or charged for a product than what was advertised? It's infuriating. You don't want your clients feeling that way about your firm. Make sure that every single invoice accurately reflects work completed on the case. One way to do this is by choosing a legal time tracking and billing software that helps you easily import tracked time into customizable invoices. With a platform like [TimeSolv](#), your law firm staff can quickly create and send out bills that are correct and timely, resulting in faster payments and increased client confidence.

Become an expert

When you develop a reputation as the go-to person in a specific area of practice, people will come to you whenever they have relevant cases. Specialization is valuable within the legal profession. Clients want to feel that they are getting the best possible representation, and if you have a reputation as the best and most knowledgeable in your practice area, you should have no problems retaining them.

Be personable

Consumers buy from people they like. I'm not saying that you need to hang out in the clubs with your clients and develop personal relationships with them, but it doesn't hurt to show some personality. Let your clients know that you are a real person and they will be more willing to work with you again in the future.

You may choose to host a client appreciation reception at your office, where clients can come in a mingle with all members of the firm. Another option, particularly if you practice within a business-related area of law, is to attend networking events where current and future clients are likely to attend. Let your clients see a bit of your personality to promote better retention.

Offer billing options

The hourly billing rate is becoming less and less desirable among savvy clients. They know about fixed fee billing and often expect law firms to offer these billing options. Many clients prefer the predictability of flat fees and are willing to leave law offices that don't offer them for firms that do. Don't underestimate the value of a fixed fee billing option. It could mean the difference between keeping and losing a profitable client.

About Erika Winston:

Erika Winston is a freelance writer with a passion for law. Through her business, The Legal Writing Studio, she helps legal professionals deliver effective written messages. Erika is a regular contributor to [TimeSolv](#) and a variety of other publications.