

July 2014

LETTER FROM A CLIENT TO ITS NEW LAW FIRM

Responsible Partner
Our New Law Firm
Anywhere in the World

Dear Mr./Ms. Partner,

We have just retained Our New Law Firm with you as the Responsible Partner. We hope this will be a long and rewarding relationship for both parties. Since, in the course of providing legal counsel, many law firms have lost touch with the basics of good client service and providing value to their clients, we want to be very clear about what we expect from you and the firm.

While we selected you because of your expertise and reputation, we also selected the firm because of its reputation and resources. Therefore, we do not want you to be a “Lone Ranger” who handles every detail yourself. We expect to be efficiently served by a team. We expect you to delegate certain matters to other attorneys and timekeepers, as well as outside resources, who have the expertise our matters and cases require.

We do, however, expect *you* to ensure quality control, closely supervise associates and efficiently manage all members of the team serving us. We also expect you will ensure that everyone who works on our matters is not only professionally competent but also well-briefed on the matter or case and on us, our procedures, our needs and our personnel. Finally, we expect you to designate a qualified partner as your back-up to serve us when you are not available.

As your client, we want your objective counsel, absent any fee considerations. We want solutions to our problems, not more problems. We also want you to help us anticipate future problems and either avoid them or prepare for them.

We have a saying here, “Only bats and mushrooms like to be kept in the dark.” This means we expect you to constantly communicate with us. It also means we want you to consult with us on decisions involving strategy, timing and expense. We don’t like surprises. Advise us on what *will* happen and prepare us for what *might* happen.

We expect everyone in the firm, including support staff, to respect the position and authority of in-house counsel and to treat each person in our company with courtesy and respect. We also expect everyone in the firm to be responsive. Remember: If we think something is important then, regardless of what you may think, it *is* important.

Naturally we expect follow-through on all matters in a timely manner. We assume you will meet all legal deadlines but we also expect you to meet – or even beat – our business deadlines.

We have already discussed fee and billing arrangements but we want to emphasize several points:

- Adhere to the agreed-upon budgets. Never surprise us with unexpected fees or expenses. Unless we have approved them in advance, we will not pay them. And remember, we will not pay for training of the firm's associates.
- Be sure all bills are accurate, free of errors and inconsistencies and adhere to the agreed-upon formats and protocols.
- Bill regularly. This helps our company plan its cash flow and, since we try to pay promptly, it also helps your firm's cash flow. It may surprise you to hear that we agree with the managing partner who once said, "Bill promptly while the glow of appreciation still shines in the client's eyes."
- You already know our policy is to minimize hourly fee arrangements because we feel they encourage inefficiency and unnecessarily increase fees. For this reason, much of your work with us will be on an alternate fee arrangement such as a fixed-fee or incentive basis. If you misjudge the time involved in these matters, that is your problem. We do not pay for inefficiency by outside counsel.
- In addition to the above basics, we also expect the firm to enhance our relationship by delivering enhanced service. Some ways you can add value to your services are by:
 - Utilizing current technology within the firm and from outside resources.
 - Maintaining an up-to-date knowledge management system.
 - Keeping us up-dated and informed about matters that may affect us by means of newsletters, client alerts and on-site seminars.

We also expect you to schedule periodic client feedback meetings with us regarding your work and service.

As you have gathered by now, we try to be honest and straightforward. This leads me to one final point. We have not retained Our New Law Firm and you simply because of your expertise. There are other firms and lawyers that have the same expertise you have. There were other reasons for our selection. They can be summarized by saying that we believe you and the firm will not only meet our legal needs but will also serve us in the way we want to be served. Perhaps you will even exceed our expectations.

We trust you and the firm will understand that the purpose of this letter is to clearly state our expectations so that you will be successful as our counsel and we, in turn, will be delighted to be your client. With best wishes for a long and mutually beneficial relationship, I remain,

Very truly yours,

Vice President & General Counsel
Your New Client, Inc.

We have provided strategic marketing and management counsel to law firms throughout the United States and parts of Canada for 40 years. Other Communiqués discussing timely issues, as well as information about our services, are posted on our web site, www.robertdenney.com

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