

FREE CONSUMER REPORT

6

MAJOR MISTAKES

to avoid when choosing

AN ESTATE PLANNING ATTORNEY



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Dear Friend,

Having worked with families for years, we've discovered that what you really want is to have a caring professional shoot straight with you when it comes to your legal and financial matters.

So, we're going to nix the complicated legal jargon during this short report and, instead, give you the simple, unvarnished truth.

Sound good?

Did you know that many families "fly in the dark" when it comes to securing the financial and legal future of their loved ones? It's sad, but true.

As an estate planning attorney, it bothers me hearing countless stories of families forced into legal battles during the most painful times in their lives, simply because they never found a trusted advisor to help them get their affairs in order.

Well, you've already taken the first step towards shedding real light on your family's future by requesting this free report, and you're about to discover how you can cut through the lawyer talk and avoid the costly mistakes made by so many when choosing an attorney for their family's legal planning needs.

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HERE ARE THE **6** BIGGEST MISTAKES WE'VE SEEN...

#1 MISTAKE

going it alone

WITH "CHEAP" ONLINE OPTION

Did you know that some lawyers actually joke to one another about how good those online legal programs (LegalZoom®, Pre-Paid Legal®, etc.) are for THEIR business?

Why would that be?

First, because these cheap, online options are NOT as “easy to use” as claimed. Second, they actually cost you an arm and a leg because you will more than likely need to hire a real lawyer to clean up the mess!

You might think they seem like an inexpensive and safe option. But using DIY programs can end up leaving thousands (or much more) of YOUR assets in the coffers of Uncle Sam . . . even if you follow all of their instructions word for word. We see it ALL THE TIME — frustrated clients bringing in online-generated plans, **astonished at all the mistakes made and money left on the table.**

There are cases where the fine print caused parents to accidentally disinherit a child or leave assets to the wrong beneficiary. Small businesses can wind up in the hands of a spouse and unnecessary taxes be paid to the government and the state. **These mistakes are more common than you might think.**

The security you get from these plans is actually false security.

Now, it's not our intention to scare you, but again — we've seen it more than we'd like.

Frustrated families coming to see us during a period of great stress, and our team having to undo poorly-crafted plans created by well-intentioned families (or even other lawyers), which ends up costing everybody far more than they'd like. (And we're not just talking about money, either. The time wasted and the emotional toll is immense.)

So, we hope you are with us: YOU AGREE that choosing a well-trained and caring professional, who will put YOUR interests first — rather than just making another sale online — is of utmost importance.

Let's get to the issues you'll deal with in choosing the right estate planning lawyer for your needs.



#2 MISTAKE

choosing a lawyer who will charge
OUTRAGEOUSLY HIGH HOURLY RATES FOR SERVICES

Many lawyers will lure you with “cheap” basic estate planning services . . . and proceed to rack up the fees as they execute more complicated estate planning services that really should have been covered by the original flat fee. Billable hours for estate planning lawyers in big NYC firms can run over one thousand dollars – PER HOUR! You will literally be billed in 6-minute increments, which serves to do little else other than make you think twice before calling your attorney for even the most basic question. And that is just for the initial plan alone. What about a year from now when your family circumstances have changed?

When you’re investigating flat fee services from a lawyer, here are some simple questions to ask:

- Are all of your fees flat fees?
- What about ongoing work after the initial completion of my estate planning documents?
- What happens when I call with legal questions 2 years after my planning documents were completed?
- What if the questions are about something other than my estate plan?
- Will you help fund my trust? (see Mistake #5)

You need to be satisfied with the answers you receive to these questions, as they often sneak up on families after the fact, and can be a major drain on your family’s cash flow.



#3 MISTAKE

not ensuring that there is a plan in place

FOR REGULAR COMMUNICATION AS THE LAWS AND TAX CODE CHANGE

There are actually several problems we've seen here. We'll say off the bat that an out-of-date estate plan is often worse than having no planning at all. Estate planning is not a "one time" thing, where you complete your documents and stash them away in a drawer for emergencies. They must be kept up to date as your life and the law changes through the years.

So why aren't more lawyers proactively working with clients to keep their plans current on a long-term basis?

Here are a few common problems we see:

Some lawyers don't have a team in place to serve the needs of families. This creates a less than ideal circumstance for a family who wants active management, as things inevitably slip through the cracks.

These lawyers have to spend so much time on administrative tasks that they don't have the time (or, often, inclination) to make sure assets are owned properly (which means your plan will fail!) or that they're up to date on the legal and tax changes that come through every year.

This leaves new opportunities untouched, or worse . . . it can create a plan that works for 2020 but won't work in 2030.

What happens when things change in your family? Perhaps there is a marriage, divorce, birth of a child, retirement or sale of a key asset? Unfortunately, even if there IS a team approach in place, there may not be a previously-agreed upon plan for communication when the laws inevitably change, or when family dynamics become different.

So, how can you ensure that your plan is staying up to date as your life and the law change?

Make sure that your lawyer will notify you when, in fact, there are changes to the tax or legal code, and that they keep in regular communication with you otherwise. Be sure to ask about complimentary document reviews and protocol for updating your documents if you experience a significant life change . . . or even just change your mind about what's in your will or trust.

In fact, the optimum scenario is when a lawyer provides you with an estate planning Membership Program, for ongoing service, which saves you money and gives you peace-of-mind over the course of your life.



#4 MISTAKE

— only addressing 'obvious' assets —
& NOT HAVING A LAWYER WORK WITH YOU TO PASS ON YOUR INTANGIBLE WHOLE FAMILY WEALTH

Most everyone recognizes that life is about more than just making money.

What about your values? The things you would want your children to know if you were unable to teach them yourself? The sound of your voice providing support and encouragement? These kinds of intangible assets can, and should, be passed right along with your financial wealth.

So why is that most estate planning lawyers don't (or won't) address this very obvious truth?

We happen to believe that families seek to pass on wealth to their loved ones in a manner which passes on a deeper heritage than just a bank account.

Too often, families may be left with a structure that doesn't properly honor the richness of their experience. Don't let that happen — life is more than cash.



#5 MISTAKE

working with a firm that will not help you
FUND YOUR TRUST

Creating your trust is only half the battle. If it's not properly funded, meaning assets are properly titled and held in the name of the trust, the trust becomes nothing but a worthless stack of papers!

Here's the deal: If your assets are not titled properly in the name of the trust, and you pass away, they will still have to go through probate – the very thing you were trying to avoid when creating a trust in the first place! An unfunded trust does nothing to safeguard that asset or protect your family.

You may be wondering why, if funding is so important, would a lawyer refuse to help?

Generally, because the funding of a trust is so time consuming and research intensive, many lawyers choose just not to get involved. They may lack the time, staff, or both.

When you finally get around to funding your trust, your lawyer gives you a few basic instructions and sends you off to contact banks, change titles, and tackle a whole bunch of complicated paperwork on their own. Or worse, they rely entirely on a pour-over will (which will require probate.)

The result is that things are done incorrectly and assets get overlooked. It's not discovered until a crisis happens.

Please avoid this huge mistake for you and your family!

Because the funding process is SO incredibly important, don't even take chances in this area. Work with a law firm that will help you fund your trust – at no additional charge. This will give you peace of mind knowing that everything was done correctly and that all bases have been covered.



#6 MISTAKE

not choosing a lawyer who is an expert
IN THE KIND OF SERVICE YOU ACTUALLY NEED

Unfortunately, with the way that most estate planning lawyers present themselves to the world, it seems like we're all the same. We seem to offer the same services for pretty similar fees. If we weren't working every day in this industry, we'd probably assume the same thing. But, nothing could be further from the truth.

You see, each lawyer does have certain qualifications. Some might be experts at employment law, or in working with corporations or with debt collection, or a whole variety of different things... some lawyers may offer estate planning services right alongside criminal defense and general litigation! Are these lawyers really providing what you, the family person, needs?

When we sit down and talk with regular folks, here's what we discover:

You want to work with a caring professional who knows you and your family...NOT one of those "cattle call" shops, where you're squeezed in with a bunch of other people, and seen by harried, poorly-trained paralegals. Or worse, a corporate shop which can't shake the legalese, and can leave you feeling cold by not relating to you as a family with sincere desires.

You want an accurately prepared plan, broken down in terms that you understand, and in a way that you don't need a translator to communicate. You want there to be processes in place to ensure that the most money is kept out of the grasping hands of Uncle Sam, and in your wallet (legally).

You want a "heads up" about future ways you can legally add provisions and make sure that you can preserve even more assets in the future. You want assurances that everything your lawyer is doing for you is valid and correct. And, you want to hear from your lawyer regularly and be able to communicate back without getting a surprise bill in the mail a few weeks later.



And of course, you want to do it in a timely manner. We know this is a big deal for you... you don't want your lawyer pushing back at you all the time, saying "give me more time," when you know it's not because they're working hard on your behalf, but they're so poorly organized that they're not getting ANYBODY'S work done on time!

Here's the bottom line: You want professionalism, personal service, accuracy, clarity...and at the end of the day, you want to KNOW you are preserving the greatest proportion of your assets possible, so that you and your family can sleep in peace.



**If the lawyer you are talking to
can't do these things ...
... you need to call one that can!**



CONCLUSION

You don't have to fall prey to these mistakes

We hope this report has opened your eyes to important lessons about setting up your estate plan. Some of them may be ones you already knew in your gut and had just never verbalized before.

Avoiding these mistakes before you engage an estate planning lawyer will ensure you put in place an estate plan for your family that will really work when you need it and won't end up just a pile of worthless paper after you are gone.

Yes, choosing the RIGHT lawyer is an investment of time and money, and it's a wise investment. We say "wise" because the consequences of a poorly-executed plan are awful in the short and long term.



TAKE ACTION NOW

GET STARTED WITH YOUR OWN ESTATE PLAN!

[Click here to schedule your Life and Legacy Planning Session](#)
[and we will waive the usual \\$750 charge!](#)



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