

## ADVICE ON ADVERTISING

Dear all,

There was a recent thread about cost-effective advertising. I have taken the advice from that thread and purchased an ad in my church bulletin. It was reasonably priced and think it will be a great investment in my community. It will begin showing up in two weeks.

I live in a rural area with lots of little speed traps and lots of weekenders driving down from Dallas to a nice recreational lake in my area (we are about 1 hour outside of Dallas). There are several empty billboards in the area, no lawyers on any of them for miles, the total cost to advertise just for summer would be approximately \$2000.00. Has anyone had luck with billboard advertising? I don't think I would need to do anything splashy, just my name, number and types of law. I am considering traffic law as one of my main practice areas. I don't have a large budget and this would be a large chunk of my budget for outlay, but I believe if I get some clients in I can make a real go of it in less time.

What does everyone think. Is billboard advertising worth it?

Thank you all for your time and effort making this list fantastic.

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I just drove to Las Vegas and saw two billboards one did dui for \$1200 and the other for \$750.00 the cheaper guy had more billboards, i don't know how they work but I doubt the \$1200 guy gets any business.

Martha Jo Patterson, California

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For those interested here's a review of the discount lawyer ad market in Vegas.

<[http://www.lvbusinesspress.com/articles/2010/02/15/news/iq\\_34215269.txt](http://www.lvbusinesspress.com/articles/2010/02/15/news/iq_34215269.txt)>

The race for the bottom is getting crowded (and I'm not even talking about Nevada politics).

Brian Elliott, Nevada

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Wow! I would imagine you need a volume of cases and plenty of staff to make this model work.

LaTonia Denise Wright, Ohio

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You're absolutely right, LaTonia. From what I know of these firms, they're volume businesses with lots of staff and no client service to speak of.

"Mills" doesn't even begin to describe them.

But even worse, I'm convinced it's a bait and switch, much like H&R Block does tax returns. We'll do your tax return for \$50 but oh, wait, YOU have a SPECIAL situation that requires us to do a LOT more work and it's going to cost a LOT more than the \$50 we advertised.

Maybe I'm just bitter because I know the guy who owns the joint is making a hell of a lot more money than I am for far less work. He's off in the freaking Caribbean while his staff does all the work.

Hm. Realizing my posts over the last hour are wrought with negativity.

Maybe I should sign off before I drag anyone else down with me. :/

Gina Madsen, Nevada

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I've thought about billboards for my practice (exclusively traffic & misdemeanors). I'd be the only attorney in the area doing it, that's for sure.

I haven't looked into it seriously, but I might should. It would certainly have to bring in several clients a month to be worth it, but who knows until you try?

For the nay-sayers out there, I wouldn't put "half price attorneys" and cartoon characters on the billboard. Instead, I'd go with "The Ticket

Hammer" or something equally awesome. 🤔

If you give it a try, let us know how it goes! I'll do the same.

Andrew Flusche, Virginia

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I was really surprised how many lawyer ads I heard on radio, saw on billboards and on TV when I was in Vegas last week. We don't really get any of that here in Hawaii. (well, we have no billboards)

Disclaimer: Even though Richard Susskind sends me a bill for .4 of an hour whenever I say it, I've still never been a lawyer.

Ben M. Schorr, Hawaii

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Andrew Flusche, "The Ticket Terminator."

Kevin W. Grierson, Virginia

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LOL!

Now I know where I'll turn when I need good ideas for the billboard.

I always wonder how judges react to attorneys who use advertising slogans like that. Maybe it's fairly anonymous in a big city. But the judges all know us here, and they see the advertising just like potential clients. I'd be worried they'd find my catchy ad offensive to the profession and stick it to me in court.

Andrew Flusche

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These firms also don't do a whole lot for you that you can't do yourself (at least for the criminal cases). The \$500 DUI cases are pled as soon as possible. The attorney goes with you to court, and you plead to the DUI. You could do that without the attorney, and in many cases get the same deal. If there was no reasonable suspicion for the stop, good luck getting the attorney to file a motion for \$500. Don't even think of going to trial because it isn't going to happen. I am pretty sure that some firms don't even order discovery. I know one firm that when you try to do something a little out of the ordinary suggests a quick court date for client to plead. Not all firms are like that, but the cheaper the rate, the less chance you are going to get representation that will look into your case, spend anytime going over defenses or going to trial. Pretty sad when I think of it.

Some of these mills charge \$500 for the case, plead the case out, and then withdraw immediately. The client is then responsible to go to all future court appearances alone (unless he pays to hire an attorney), and to make sure all requirements are done (and from experience, that doesn't happen since they often lose paperwork or forget). Not good, but that is what happens a lot when you are running a mill.

Jonathan Schulman, Nevada

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The bar doesn't investigate and stop this behavior?

Lisa Babcock, Michigan

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What the Ticket Terminator may look like:

<http://c3patents.businesscatalyst.com/Images/temp/F-1000.jpg>

Steve O'Donnell, Pennsylvania

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I haven't seen any of the fee agreements, but I wouldn't be surprised if they say the fee is \$500, and only covers negotiation. If a trial is requested, it will cost \$3000 (or whatever). Attorneys here do that. If the client agrees, then I don't see the bar doing anything since I don't believe it is an ethical violation.

Jonathan Schulman

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My thoughts are not to be a low-cost leader.

I have just left a firm like that. You would be surprised at how well some can operate. I don't know about all firms, but even though I didn't like it, the one I worked for was able to provide excellent service and would take any case to trial. They gave their attorneys bonuses for each traffic case they took to trial and additional bonus if they won their cases. They did that by focusing on specific courts. That way they could have 120 cases in the tiny municipal courthouse per day. Stressful but cost effective to put 1-2 young but smart attorneys in the courthouse each day. Each client got to find out what the prosecutor was offering, accept or decline - because of the bonus structure, the attorneys were encouraged to take things to trial. There were copies of the traffic codes and zoning laws easily accessible at courthouse for attorneys. I know not every low-cost firm is as good, but you would be amazed at the service they could provide. That also gave them credibility with the prosecutors -- prosecutors knew they could and would fight every ticket if they had to.

For me, I don't plan on doing a volume business, but if I get more calls I can be more choosy and I can refer out the rest. There aren't any focused traffic lawyers in my county and a dozen or so speed traps... so I think I could charge a decent fee and still get the amount that will support me.

I will be calling back to negotiate a price. I just don't think the amount justifies.

Laura W. Holder, Texas

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I may be coming late to this discussion, but I had to add my two cents.

There's a great billboard on Rt 17 in Orange County, NY. There's a depiction of a motorist driving a car with the police lights flashing in the driver's rearview mirror. The tag line is something like "If they got you, you need us"

Only one problem with the sign. I don't remember the name of the law firm.

Because I advertise I pay attention to what other lawyers are doing for advertising. I don't know if I would use a billboard, especially in an area where people are mostly passing through to get some place else. If I can't remember the name of the firm, and I've seen the sign at least 10 times over the last 2 years, I don't know if a motorist with a ticket would remember it either.

Glen P. Malia, New York

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One of my good friends used BB ads for at least five years. If you want me to check with him for hard data on cost/return ratio over time, let me know. He also had many BB sites, so he can offer some advice on placement, if he's willing.

Larry Frost  
/aka The Least Weasel

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I know I'm late to this discussion, but a former law school classmate of mine has billboards all over Knoxville and Sevierville, TN. You can sometimes see two of them from the same spot. He does mostly personal injury and auto accidents. There is a good chance that, if you are in an accident in these two counties, you will be looking at one of his signs while you wait for the cops to arrive.

I overheard two lawyers in Bristol, TN, discussing the billboards today and the nearest one is probably 80 miles from here. They weren't exactly praising his marketing skills, but the fact that they were talking about him this far away speaks volumes, IMO.

Here is a video which shows one of the billboards, if you are interested.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nG7Sn2fRsPA#t=00m46s>

Michael McKinney, Tennessee

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