

5 things to consider when choosing a solicitor

Choosing a solicitor is not to be done lightly, as your solicitor's abilities can have far-reaching implications should any legal matters arise, whether in your business affairs or personal life.

Misleading advertisements and excessively low rates are just a few of the pitfalls to be wary of when seeking trustworthy legal advice; so to help you make the best possible choice for your needs, here are five things to consider before hiring a lawyer.

1. Recommendations

It's strongly advised that you do a bit of research before hiring a solicitor. Speaking with colleagues, friends and family members to get the names and numbers of firms who have proven themselves to be of a high standard, with an ethical practice and an excellent track record.

Recommendations on online chat forums should be regarded with caution, as there is no guarantee that these aren't part of a firm's marketing strategy.

2. Cheap Quotes

While small fees and huge promises may be tempting, the reality is that you often get what you pay for and cheap quotes usually reflect sub-standard services.

As a result, hiring a 'budget solicitor' to save money can actually cost you far more in the long run if the solicitor doesn't perform well, for example if you need to hire a second solicitor to complete any unfinished work. These costs can be avoided if you make the right choice at the start.

3. Your Own Level of Expertise

For small business owners in particular, you may be uncertain as to whether or not you actually need professional legal advice for certain

technical issues, especially as Google makes it so easy to access legal information. However, no search engine can give you the experience or the in-depth knowledge of legal intricacies like a qualified lawyer. Internet searches can generally provide basic answers to concepts, but cannot be relied on to advise you on how those matters might apply to your specific circumstances.

So unless you have a legal background, you should always seek legal advice from a lawyer, not the internet.

4. First Impressions

When having your first consultation with a solicitor, be sure to meet with them in person at their offices (or by video call as convenient) so you can get an accurate impression of who they are and what their practice is like. It's worth noting that most firms, including us, will offer an initial consultation free of charge.

To ensure that the solicitor is appropriate for your needs, bring all documentation relating to your matter at the first meeting - even the smallest details will be useful for the solicitor to know, and can make a difference to their advice, giving you a more accurate gauge on whether they're the right solicitor for you.

5. Ask the Right Questions

At your first consultation, be sure to ask the following key questions:

- How much experience do they have with cases similar to your own?
- How long have they been practising?
- Can they provide references from their former or current clients?
- Who exactly will be handling your work?
- What happens if something goes wrong?
- How would the firm like to be paid?

So now you have a better idea of what to consider before you choose a solicitor.

For more information, or for expert advice on business or personal legal issues, call us on 020 3475 6751 or via email at info@carterbond.co.uk

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