

Legal Services: Adding Value To The Transaction

By Cynthia L. Golomb

In the fast-paced age of the Internet,
our ability to easily re



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LEGAL BRIEF

trieve, and use information has dramatically affected our lives. For most of us, "surfing the Net" is not now as easy as placing a telephone call. But as technology advances, we can expect that access to many resources will become more efficient and readily available. Information on many topics will not be the exclusive domain of an elite or specialized group, but will be open to those who care to find it.

While access to information on the Internet has improved our lives, it does not replace old-fashioned, face-to-face interaction. This is especially important when dealing with the most fundamental of human problems, managing personal and business relationships.

It is a cliché to observe that Americans live in a litigious society. But, as with all clichés, there is truth in this observation. Conflicts in human relationships are all too frequently expressed in lawsuits. In dealing with this basic fact, it is useful to obtain the assistance of a professional trained to work within the legal system and resolve the conflict.

The services provided by attorneys to assist clients in resolving their conflicts are varied in scope. Sometimes, the

most important service an attorney can provide is a thorough exploration of a client's problem. It is not unusual for a client to think that his or her problem touches on one particular aspect of the law and then learn that, in fact, it relates to a different aspect. In addition to helping define a client's problem, an attorney can explain how the law is applied in the particular client's situation. While retrieval of the law is relatively easy on the Internet or in the many "form books" found in the library, understanding the substance of the law and navigating through the maze of legal procedure involved in many lawsuits or legal transactions can be an overwhelming task that may be greatly simplified by an attorney.

An attorney can also explore alternative ways to resolve a client's problem. For example, in certain situations, particularly where opposing parties must in some fashion continue their relationship with one another, an attempt to resolve conflict through mediation may be a better choice than filing a lawsuit.

In situations where people have different interests, an attorney serves as a buffer between a client and an opposing party. In addition to making communica-

tion possible between people who may be angry with each other, an attorney advocates a client's point of view with an eye toward resolution of the problem. If a lawsuit is filed, an attorney continues the representation of a client's interests by advocating the client's point of view before the court so that the client can be heard fairly before the issue is adjudicated.

Access to information through research on the Internet and other new technologies improves everyone's ability to manage transactions in a complicated world. In dealing with managing personal and business relationships, such information is best used as a starting point and not as an end in itself. Thoughtful assistance from legal professionals enhances the value of this information and ultimately may speed the resolution of age-old, yet persistent, problems.

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