

3 Questions

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Stephen Good is the managing partner at Gardere Wynne Sewell LLP in Dallas. Good has developed a tax law practice that focuses on corporate and partnership tax issues. For more than 25 years, he's been advising clients on the purchases of stocks and assets as well as a variety of other related matters.



Q. How can a business best utilize its lawyer?

The main thing is to communicate. A lawyer is like a doctor; if you don't tell them what's going on, they can't help you. Tell the lawyer what services you expect and what kind of experience you want. Like health care, it's more preventive. It's a lot cheaper to plan in advance and avoid problems than afterward when you have to deal with the issues.

Q. How should a company prepare for a meeting with its lawyer?

The client can do a lot of the legwork ahead of the time so that they come prepared to the meeting. If there is a particular issue they want to discuss, then they should get the necessary information together and send it to the lawyer ahead of time. The goal is the best legal advice on the most cost-efficient basis. The more homework a client can do, the less time will be wasted in the meeting.

Q. What steps should a company take to find the best legal advice?

Traditionally, people have gotten lawyers through referrals from friends or business acquaintances. I suggest that people get those referrals and then meet with two or three of the lawyers, because a lot of it is a personality fit. There may be three great lawyers, but you get along better with one over the others. Good communication is also key. The easier it is to communicate between the lawyer and the client, the better the lawyer will understand the scope of the operation.