

# CLIENT DEVELOPMENT

## with Rudy Rivera

### Good Lawyer, Bad Lawyer

By Rudy Rivera

Selecting a competent lawyer often comes down to the client's willingness to perform thorough due diligence – researching and verifying a lawyer's qualifications, experience, and reputation through reliable sources and feedback.

#### The Importance of Careful Selection

Finding suitable legal representation can be stressful and time-consuming. Clients must assess whether a lawyer is genuinely invested in their case or primarily focused on their firm's profit margins.

#### The Initial Consultation

The process starts with an initial consultation, serving as a two-way interview. While the lawyer gathers information about the case, the client evaluates the lawyer's appearance, competence, experience, availability, and fees. This meeting helps both sides determine if they wish to move forward with the professional relationship.



#### Conducting Due Diligence

During the due diligence phase, clients should pay attention to the lawyer's character, temperament, and openness when discussing background, experience, and billing practices. This is the time to investigate potential risks or red flags that might affect the attorney-client relationship.

When performed thoroughly, due diligence allows clients to distinguish between a capable lawyer and an unsuitable one – potentially determining the outcome of their case.

#### Special Considerations for International Cases

Choosing the right attorney becomes even more critical when dealing with legal matters in other regions or countries. Court procedures and customs may differ significantly from those at home and choosing the right lawyer – one who's experienced in the region – is often key to a case's success.

For example, in one Latin American land dispute, a lawyer inadvertently submitted an appearance to the court, which triggered an accelerated schedule for submitting documents. The mistake forced the client to involve three additional lawyers, resulting in unnecessary complications and costs.



#### The Value of Multiple Opinions

The above example illustrates the importance of interviewing several attorneys before making a final decision. Although it may lengthen the selection process, taking the time to compare candidates helps identify and avoid potential problems. It's like getting a second medical opinion before a major health decision. If a lawyer reacts negatively to your request for another opinion, consider it a clear sign that they may not be the right choice.

#### Final Thoughts

Remember: first impressions matter. They set the tone for all subsequent interactions and heavily influence whether a professional relationship moves forward. In the legal world, where the stakes are high, you rarely get a second chance to make a first impression.