

Rhonda Hill Wilson, Esquire
Law Offices of Rhonda Hill Wilson, PC
1500 John F. Kennedy Blvd., Suite 1050
Philadelphia, PA 19102

ABVE Fall Conference, October 2007

“Taking VE Skills to the Next Level: Tips & Traps”

How to Be the Vocational Expert that Every Lawyer Seeks to Hire

Rhonda Hill Wilson, Esquire will discuss areas that will both improve your skills as a VE and your chances of being hired by attorneys, so that you can continue to be a highly sought after vocational expert practicing in the field that you chose, AND be able to make money, as well.

1. Make certain that your resume/curriculum vitae is accurate. Do not overstate or misrepresent any area contained within your curriculum vitae because an attorney can and will ferret that overstatement or misrepresentation and it will tarnish your credibility at time of trial.
2. Having a Web site is a great benefit, but your online presence should always reflect the professionalism you wish to project, and it should be designed in a way that conveys the seriousness and validity of your experience and qualifications. Often attorneys will go to the Web to investigate a potential expert before deciding to use him/her.
3. Testing should be done by the appropriate professional in your office.
4. A full array of testing should be done for every client.
5. Do not ignore certain test results in order to come to a predetermined conclusion. This is treading on dangerous ground and could tarnish your credibility and reputation. If you've done this in the past, people will talk about it and it will make an attorney who is on the fence about hiring you, choose the next best person.
6. Balance your clientele. For example, accept cases from plaintiffs and defendants and from various areas of law, or even outside the legal field. Lawyers like to see that their experts are neutral, and that they have a wide range of experience. This makes for a witness who will be perceived as not taking sides, and will be more likely to be trusted and believed by jurors.
7. Be Prepared, thoroughly prepared. When it is time to testify, know your report and what you have written without having to read it on the stand. Have an image in your head of the client. Remember the personality, characteristics, etc. This will help you feel

confident about the information you are presenting, so that you are then able to focus on forming intelligent and logical responses to difficult questions from the opposing side.

8. Have a ready response to the income trap. Be prepared to explain what you charge and why you charge that amount.