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“Truth Serum” for your Prospective Dental Attorney

Here is a very thorough list of questions to ask your prospective dental law attorney. I, of course will provide my own answers to this list upon request:

Conflict of Interest Check:

1. Has the other party already contacted you about this transaction?
2. Have you ever represented the other party to this transaction?
 - In what context?
3. If prior contact or representation, do you have written permission to talk to me about this transaction?
4. (If desired) do you provide joint representation:
 - in this type of transaction?
 - in this particular situation?
 - Has the other party already consented to joint representation?
 - Please explain the ramifications of joint representation.
5. Do you give anything to those that referred me to you for that referral?
 - If so, what do you give?
 - If so, how could that payment affect the cost of the services you provide me?
6. Do you receive anything from those to whom you refer me for that referral (such as practice brokers, lenders, insurance salesmen, practice consultants, CPAs)?
 - If so, what do you receive?
 - If so, how could that payment affect the cost of the services they provide me?

Credentials:

1. Are you a licensed to practice law in my state?
 - If so, for how long?
 - If not, do you associate with a licensed attorney in my state?
 - What are the associated attorney's credentials?
 - How does that associated attorney contribute to my representation?
 - How is that associated attorney paid?
2. Where did you get your training?
 - Where did you graduate college? Year of graduation?
 - Where did you graduate law school? Year of graduation?
 - What was your law school class rank at graduation?
 - Do you have any other relevant court admissions or credentials?
3. What is your 3rd party attorney rating:
 - from Martindale.com (rated by other attorneys)?
 - from Avvo.com (rated on objective standards)?
4. Have you ever been disciplined by any state? If so, explain.

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(continued)

Experience:

1. How many years have you been a licensed attorney?
2. How many years have you been completing my type of dental practice transition?
3. How did you originally learn to complete my type of dental practice transition?
4. What documents and aspects of my transaction can you discuss, draft and/or review?
5. How many of my particular type of transaction have you personally completed:
 - overall?
 - in the past year?

Fees:

1. How am I charged for your work (hourly, flat rate, and/or percentage of transaction)?
 - If hourly, what is your smallest billing unit (.1 hr = 6 min, .25 hr = 15 min, etc.)?
 - If flat rate, what does that rate include? What sorts of things does it exclude?
 - If percentage, how does that create a conflict of interest for you in my representation?
2. How and when do you bill me for your work?
3. Do you accept checks or credit cards?
4. Is there a fee agreement to be signed before starting work?
5. What payment needs to be made before starting work?

Practice Style:

1. How quickly can you complete my work?
2. How do you keep me informed of my work status?
3. What days and hours are you generally available?
4. Can we communicate in person, by phone, by email, by webcam?
5. What is your process in completing my transaction?
 - How do you involve me in that process?
6. Do you have any ongoing educational resources for my use (such as articles, blogs, discussion boards, legal guides, etc.).

You also should feel free to ask any other questions you believe are relevant to your representation.

Sincerely yours,

Robert W. Olson, Jr.