



Special Capabilities Required of Attorneys for Bankruptcy Work

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In order to properly prepare and present a bankruptcy case in compliance with constantly changing forms and requirements, there is no substitute for capable professional assistance. Here are some things to look for when interviewing attorneys to handle your bankruptcy matter:

Ask About Software: There are several choices of software to facilitate preparation of the documents and electronic filing service that is required by the US Bankruptcy courts. Our office has selected **Best Case™** software, which keeps us abreast of changes in the law and updates to forms that must be timely incorporated into the paperwork we file. It is not feasible to perform quality legal services on a reasonable scale without this software support.

Electronic Filing: The US Bankruptcy Courts have mandated use of their "Electronic Court Filing" (ECF) system. In the Central District of California this requirement applies to attorneys submitting more than five (5) cases per year. In order to qualify for access, attorneys must undergo training and pass a test demonstrating their proficiency. This system allows access for court filings 24/7 and automatically generates e-mail notices to case participants of subsequent filings. Best Case interfaces with ECF to enable "one click" filing of a number of separate documents required to initiate a case, while running a verification for completeness and accuracy in the process.

Another innovation in federal courts, which includes the bankruptcy courts, is **PACER** (Public Access to Court Electronic Records). All attorneys who have an ECF log-on are also required to obtain PACER registration. This is the federal judiciary's centralized registration, billing and technical support center for electronic access to all court records. When ECF notices go out to case participants, the document that has been filed can be brought up on the recipient's computer, printed and saved electronically. Moreover, PACER produces the case docket on demand permitting a search of all filings and instantaneous document retrieval.

Why Hire an Attorney? Of course any individual has access to the courts and can present a case without an attorney. Corporations and other entities must have an attorney. The savings from doing without counsel, taken in relation to the lost efficiencies, makes this a dubious value proposition. Of even more importance is the fact that experienced bankruptcy attorneys have the ability to help clients avoid the many pitfalls that exist in handling a bankruptcy matter. These must be negotiated adroitly or there can be substantial losses, far in excess of the cost of attorney representation .