

CounseltoCounsel Blog

[What Clients Really Want \(hint: a trusted adviser\)](#)

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Yesterday was a Monday holiday so I decided to do what millions of Americans like to do on holidays: head to the mall. Unfortunately, this shopping spree wasn't related in any way to electronics. An hour in the Apple Store flies by quickly for me. In sharp contrast, an hour at a men's clothing store is right up there with root canal, especially on a beautiful Fall day.



In the end, I found what I needed relatively quickly and although I ended up spending twice what I had expected, I walked out reasonably content that the trip was a success. In fact, it was relatively painless as well.

I thought about that as I was heading to the car and realized that it was no accident. This shopping excursion was fundamentally different than my ordinary attempts to replace my aging wardrobe.

What was different? It all boiled down to having trusted advisers to help me make decisions, my wife and a very knowledgeable sales clerk. Normally, I try to go it alone when shopping for clothes. My MO is that shopping alone will be quicker and there will be less to negotiate.

In truth, standing amongst a large rack of suits is pretty overwhelming to me. There are so many choices. And I am not that up on fashion. Having a knowledgeable clerk who can tell me if something fits properly and having an opinionated wife who wants me to look my best, helps me make much quicker decisions.

The same is true for clients who buy your legal services. Clients want to know that someone is going to take care of their problem. With a proverbial "suit rack" of choices confronting them, clients like to know that someone else who is knowledgeable can guide them through the decision making process.

This is hardly a new concept in legal marketing. David Maister wrote eloquently about this in his book [The Trusted Adviser](#). But on a practical level, it is good to be reminded that projecting confidence (i.e. that you can handle a client's problem), is a sure fire way to gain client loyalty.