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AUTOMATIC BURIAL PAYMENTS TO SURVIVING SPOUSES OF VETERANS

Victoria L. Collier, CELA, Co-Founder *Lawyers With Purpose*

Effect July 7, 2014, new burial regulations permit the VA to automatically pay the maximum burial allowance to a surviving spouse of a veteran, without the need for an application.

For deaths related to military service, the maximum burial allowance is \$2,000. For non-service connected deaths, the allowance is \$300 (unless the veteran was hospitalized by the VA at death, then it is \$700).

Prior to this new procedure, upon the death of a veteran, the surviving spouse or other qualified person would have to file an application for reimbursement of out of pocket expenses on VA Form 21-530, Application for Burial Allowance, and provide receipts. This will no longer be necessary. The VA will use information already in the veteran's file.

It is projected that there will be approximately 140,000 claims for burial benefits in 2014. Of those, it is estimated that 62,000 surviving spouses will benefit from this new regulation.

The new regulations and automation should expedite the delivery of benefits to surviving spouses, reduce the number of claims that need manual processing, which in turn should help with the already burdened system and backlog of veterans claims.

For more information on available burial benefits, go to:

<http://www.benefits.va.gov/compensation/claims-special-burial.asp>

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MARKETING & BRANDING

Roslyn Drotar, Coaching, Consulting & Implementation Coach - Lawyers With Purpose

Marketing is actively promoting a product or service. It's a push tactic. It's getting your message out to get sales results. We like to say it's a way of letting people know "If you've got a problem, we can fix it!" That's making it a lot simpler than it truly is. But that's it.

Marketing is not branding.

Branding comes before marketing - it's the first layer of marketing. Branding doesn't push, it pulls. It's an expression of the value or service you provide. It should always communicate your value, and it should clarify the services you provide, as well as what you do NOT provide.

A brand should help someone buy your service, and support your sales and/or marketing. Your brand doesn't say "Buy me!" It says "This is who I am. This is why I do what I do. If you like me, you can buy me and recommend me to your family and friends." It's your firm reputation.

People buy from people they like. They want to get to know you. They already respect and admire you for your accomplishments, because you're an attorney and have a license to practice law; with your brand you want to humanize your practice. The relationships that you build in social channels will lead to increased brand advocacy.

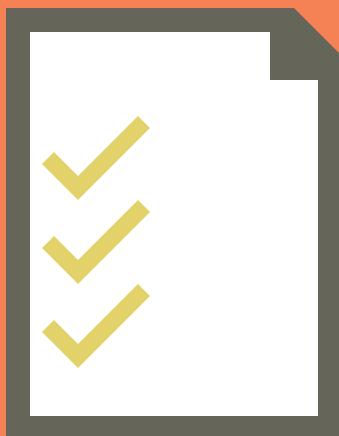
Creating an online "experience" for your clients and referral sources through your brand is an opportunity to engage and interact on a more personal level than you can with more traditional forms of media. You are talking with them. Having a conversation. The relationships you build can grow into strong brand advocates and hopefully share your message, and service.

Do you have a brand?

You don't have to spend thousands, or even hundreds of dollars. Several of our members use their firm name with standout fonts that pop. It can take time to really build your brand, so it's not something you should wait to make perfect. It doesn't matter what shade of blue you use, whether it's teal or navy blue, light blue or periwinkle. But a separate logo, as a distinct way of writing your company or product name, is not an essential requirement for a brand. Many well-known firms exist without logos. Often they rely on their name, rather than a graphic, to create the necessary impact. If that's your approach, give some care and attention to the look of your name, but don't let it stall you building it.

If you do have a brand, what are you doing with it?

When you have a brand, there are two things you need to do to build it. (1) Make sure it appears everywhere. Period. Social, stationary, pens, shirts for community outreach, workshop ads, flyers, anything with your firm or your name on it - must have your brand! (2) Deliver on your promise. Make sure that your systems and process are working, because one weak link or broken promise can weaken your brand.



MONTHLY MEMBER SURVEY

What do you think? You'll soon have a chance to let us know! In an effort to continually improve our services we rely on and value the feedback we receive from our members and thank you in advance for taking a couple of minutes to answer our brief survey. Completing the survey will put you in the running for an Amazon Gift Card, so be sure to keep an eye on your email for this month's survey!

Deadline: August 22



MEMBER OF THE MONTH

Peggy Timmel

What is the greatest success you've had since joining LWP?

Organization + Confidence = Increasing Success. That's the formula we now have in place. Sure, we still are working through some of the processes, making them our own and getting the kinks worked out when and as needed. Not all clients initially expect the process to be as involved, but there is no doubt that our efforts are appreciated.

What is your favorite LWP tool?

LWP Meeting Focuser (the green sheet) – it may sound strange to some members, but that sheet is reviewed at the end of client meetings so that tasks are delegated and the next meeting with the client put on the calendar. I've been using it for cases that are pre-LWP or non-LWP, like guardianships. It keeps our team more focused and allows us to move our clients through the entire process more smoothly.

How has being part of LWP impacted your team and your practice?

We get to travel three times a year (to the Tri-Annual Practice Enhancement Retreats) and always come back with something to improve our practice. It has been incredibly helpful to have the support system that LWP provides. The members provide a great community of support and the LWP systems and processes give us a great foundation to continually improve our practice.

NOTABLE EVENTS

Weekly

Live ListServ
Every Monday-4:00 PM EDT

Bi-Weekly

Marketing Roundtable
2nd and 4th Fridays
12:00 Noon EDT

Monthly

Veterans Marketing Moments
3rd Wednesday-3:00 PM EDT
Veterans Back to Basic Training
3rd Thursday-3:00 PM EDT
Veterans Roll Call
3rd Thursday-4:00 PM EDT

Live Programs

Practice With Purpose
October 20-22 Phoenix, AZ
Tri-Annual Retreat
October 22-24 Phoenix, AZ

To register for an event, visit our events page
LawyersWithPurpose.com/Events-for-Lawyers.php





LAWYERS WITH PURPOSE

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EARLY BIRD REGISTRATION

Deadline August 29, 2014



How would you like to be entered for one of five prizes to assist you for this upcoming Tri-Annual Practice Enhancement Retreat? Submit your attendee information to Kyle Russ at kruss@lawyerswithpurpose.com to be entered for \$150 airline gift card, a one night stay or \$150 meal voucher at the hotel.

EARLY BIRD

REGISTRATION