

The Critical Importance of Your Reception Area

Christopher Earley

Share:



A good first impression can work wonders. —J.K. Rowling

I consider the reception area to be a critically important facet of any law office. It presents a golden opportunity to “wow” people who come to your office. At the same time, a neglected reception area can quickly turn people off. Here are some easy and inexpensive ways that our law firm has enhanced our reception area so it gives a positive and memorable impression to all visitors to our firm.

An advertisement banner with a dark blue background. On the left is the iManage logo (a blue circle with a white 'm') and the text 'iManage Closing Folders'. In the center, the text reads 'M&A deals are **complex.** Signature page management shouldn't be.' Below this text are three overlapping document thumbnails showing signature pages. On the right side of the banner is an orange button with the text 'WATCH A DEMO' in white capital letters.

Trust Clues

I believe that trust clues are very important when people walk into a law office. Many people do not trust lawyers, so you want to show that you are someone who has earned people's trust. Trust clues reaffirm for potential clients as well as existing clients that you are the right firm for the job. In our reception area, we prominently display a stack of testimonial books. These books are collections of reviews from past clients. These are displayed so that they are likely to be read by visitors waiting in our reception area. They are ultimately intended to inspire and reaffirm confidence by showing social proof.

Evidence of Expertise and Authority

In our reception, we also display area practice-area books that I have written in order to demonstrate our expertise and authority. This is very intentional and is not only designed to be a free resource for people to take with them and read but is also something that separates us from other lawyers. This, like trust clues and social proof, is designed to impress on clients that we are the right law firm for the job.

Signage

I believe signage is very important in a reception area. We have a sign in our reception area that lists our core values. This is probably the most important sign we have in our reception area. This is what all clients, as well as all job applicants, see when they walk in. I have positioned the sign in the reception area so that it is impossible to miss. It shows everyone what we stand for and what is most important to us. I have never walked into another law office with a core values sign in the reception area, so this is an easy and cheap way for you to stand out from other lawyers. We also have a sign that says, “Excellent client service every day.” I want all visitors, as well as all staff, to see this when they walk in.

The reception area is also a great place to encourage a “referral culture” at your office. We have a third sign in the reception area that says, “We love your referrals.” This serves the dual purpose of educating those who may not know we want their referrals, as well as reminding those who already do know that we warmly welcome their referrals. This is a cheap and easy way that you can increase the number of referrals to your office.

Receptionist

In addition to books and signage, it is also very important to make sure that your receptionist—or whoever is greeting all visitors to your law office—does a great job. Small details, such as standing up when visitors arrive, are key. Make sure that this person is someone who likes people and who likes to smile. The

last thing you want is someone cold to be the face of your office because that will be off-putting to all who enter.

Swag

Make sure, too, that you have swag for people to take in the reception area. I like to display different kinds of swag, such as hats, shirts, ice scrapers, etc., because you never know what will appeal to any one individual. You want the swag to be easily accessible to whoever wants it. This is an easy marketing tactic that far too few firms take advantage of.

Cleanliness

Of course, it goes without saying that your reception area should be clean and never cluttered. Make sure you have comfortable chairs, as well as a wide selection of reading materials. The more comfortable you can make people, the better they will *feel* about your office and about you.

If you have other ideas on how you use your reception area to impress visitors, please email me at cearley@earleylawgroup.com because I would love to hear them.

Download the PDF of this issue

ENTITY:

SOLO, SMALL FIRM AND GENERAL PRACTICE DIVISION

TOPIC:

PRACTICE MANAGEMENT

The material in all ABA publications is copyrighted and may be reprinted by permission only. Request reprint permission [here](#).

Authors



Christopher Earley

-

Christopher Earley (www.chrisearley.com) is an author, entrepreneur, and personal injury attorney serving clients throughout Massachusetts.

Published in *GPSolo eReport*, Volume 13, Number 47, November 2023. © 2023 by the American Bar Association. Reproduced with permission. All rights reserved. This information or any portion thereof may not be copied or disseminated in any form or by any means or stored in an electronic database or retrieval system without the express written consent of the American Bar Association. The views expressed in this article are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the positions or policies of the American Bar Association or the Solo, Small Firm and General Practice Division.