

References – some key themes

Here are some themes, values, and issues to which referees may be guided in formulating their statement of support for the legal services which you provide.

Knowledge

- Circumstances under which the referee has come to know your services
- Background to referee's personal involvement in dealings with you and your firm

Similar experience

- Description of the nature of legal services you provide to the referee

Expertise

- Authoritativeness of your advice
- Your expertise in dealing with the issues which arise in these matters
- Standing of your "experts" in the industry/field

Timeliness

- Working to deadlines and approach to urgent matters
- Meeting service standards
- Dependability and consistency

Accessibility

- Availability of your lawyers and support staff

Resources

- Depth of team
- Correct allocation of legal resources

Appropriateness for this kind of enterprise

- Right type/style of legal advice

Understanding of business environment

- Appreciation of business challenges
- Understanding of industry/sector concerns

Communication and feedback

- Appropriateness and timeliness
- Reporting and updating on progress of matters
- Seeking feedback on satisfaction with services
- Providing feedback to client on internal processes and approaches

Teamwork and cooperation

- With staff of referee organisation
- With other experts or advisers

Cost-effectiveness

- Cost-effectiveness of overall approaches to matters
- Strategic value

Billing

- Accuracy, timeliness, frequency, level of detail, formats

Early resolution focus

- Referee's assessment of your proactivity in resolving matters quickly and at minimum expense

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Conflict of interest

- Recognition of areas of potential conflict
- Conflict avoidance
- Resolution of conflict situations

Quality

- Observable effects of your quality programme in action
- Sense of assurance resulting

Work quality reviews and surveys

- Positive effects from your processes to assess referee's satisfaction

Value added services

- Areas where you have added value to the relationship with special/extra services

Ease of dealings

- How you and your lawyers are consistently easy to work with

Value for money

- Appreciation of value
- Comparisons (favourable) with other legal services

Differentiation

- Key differences in the experience of working with your firm from others
- Contrasts with competitor firms
- "Client-friendliness"
- Why you're favoured
- Recommendation