

Find Me A Specialist!

By Ted Muegenburg

"This is one of the most important areas of our life, and I don't know who to hire. Frankly, I don't even know what I should be looking for. Can you help me?" lamented Mr. K., who retired after a successful career, at one of my recent seminars.

As you might imagine, he is not the first to ask me that question. You may be asking the same thing.

Having made presentations to hundreds of people over the last quarter of a century and working with dozens of attorneys, accountants and financial advisors who also work with people of means, here are some of my thoughts. In this complex area, you need to work with a specialist. A specialist focuses on you, works exclusively with people just like you and is an acknowledged all-star.

A specialist focuses on you and your issues

The best way to determine someone's focus is to spend some time with them.

"I barely had time to speak," complained Anna, a retired woman on her own, who attempted to interview an advisor to determine if they were a specialist. That's a real tip-off that you're not with a true specialist: they do most of the talking when you first get together.

When they do talk, are they helping you think about your dreams and concerns, or are they talking about what they do? That's the second tip-off. The first job of a true specialist is to help you determine what's most important to you and what's most urgent.

Lastly, do you understand them—do they speak in plain English or techno-talk? You also want to see a description of their process. Is it their own unique process or someone else's?

A specialist helps people just like you

Once you have accumulated more than \$1 Million, you are in the top two percent of wealth holders in the United States. Your issues are unique. You need an advisor who serves others like you—exclusively.

Do they spend 100 percent of their time, effort and education on advanced wealth preservation for people like you?

"I looked on his website and he had seven specialties. How can that be?" Dr. F. asked me. "It's impossible for me to be excellent in multiple specialties."

You need to ask the advisor a few questions: What is your professional specialty? Are you a Certified Specialist in Trusts and Estate Planning? What percentage of your clients have over \$1 Million? How much have you saved your clients in taxes through your planning?

A specialist is an acknowledged all-star

"In my profession, it was clear who the true specialists were. I was a generalist before I retired. That's back when you could be one. You can't do that anymore. It's way too complex," shared Attorney S.

Every profession knows its "all-stars." All-star speaks to proven performance. There is a big difference between even a major leaguer and an all-star. All-stars can often be identified as those who are published in their field and those who teach their professional peers; you can't fool your peers.

Here are a few good questions: Where have their articles been published? Are they A-rated preeminent in Martindale.com (a peer rating service that includes judges and lawyers who practice in the same vicinity)? Are they on any Who's Who lists in the area in which they practice?

Warren Buffet said his advisors must be individuals he can trust implicitly—advisors who are at the top of their game professionally—and people that he enjoys spending time with. To me, that's another way to say that a *specialist* is an advisor who focuses on you, works exclusively with people just like you and is an all-star.

Ted Muegenburg, Founder & President of META law, inc., is a Specialist in Estate Planning, Trust & Probate Law certified by the State Bar of California Board of Legal Specialization.