

Consumers Use the Internet—You Need to Be There

By Roberta M. Gubbins

Clarence and Beth Potter have moved to Michigan from California to be near their grandchildren. Once settled in their new home, they follow the suggestion of Joshua, their California attorney, that they find a Michigan attorney to redraft their wills and powers of attorney. Clarence, well-trained by his grandson on the mysteries of the World Wide Web, turns to the Internet for help.

Clarence types “Michigan attorneys” in his browser. Up pops the State Bar of Michigan member directory (<http://directory.michbar.org>) powered by ZeekBeek. Using the tools on the site, he narrows his search to six nearby estate-planning lawyers. He clicks on profiles, pleased to see that all his selections are in good standing and licensed in Michigan. Using the information provided, he selects four to contact—one mentioned by Joshua and three with enhanced profiles. He sends inquiries to each attorney.

Would your profile make you one of Clarence’s final four?

It would if you were one of 1,800-plus members who have taken advantage of the SBM’s newly improved member directory.

What made those profiles stand out? They were informative and attractive.

ZeekBeek created easy-to-use tools to help you enhance your basic profile. You can:

- **Make use of your biography**—tell prospective clients the basics such as education and experience and a lot more about yourself. Do you skateboard? Are you a runner or perhaps a bird watcher? Clients like to feel a connection to a human being.
- **Include a photo**—have it professionally taken and make sure it’s fairly recent. It’s best if clients can put a face with your name.



- **Add your title**—are you owner, shareholder, or partner in your practice?
- **Create a tagline**—tell consumers about your practice and the clients you serve.
- **Add your active social accounts with easy links.**
- **List all jurisdictions in which you are licensed to practice**—perhaps the prospective client needs a lawyer who can practice in a neighboring state. You can indicate this in the professional details section.

The newly redesigned member directory lets you add even more information. For example, you can list your community connections; volunteering, sitting on boards, or coaching a team are activities that might seal the deal for consumers. List other languages you speak—your fluency in Spanish or French could help you land your next client.

Are you accepting new clients? If so, turn on that feature in your profile and consider adding that you want consumer contact. A form allowing prospective clients to

send you a query will appear. The form’s instructions advise consumers they shouldn’t include confidential information and that sending the form does not create an attorney-client relationship.

Folks searching the web are accustomed to seeing reviews.

SBM members understand that, and many are opting in to the “Recommendations” feature, which includes both reviews and endorsements. You can opt in to one or both of these features. ZeekBeek first checks a review for inappropriate language and then sends the reviewer’s name to the attorney to be sure the author is actually a client. Endorsements let clients rate you according to attributes such as “Client felt educated” or “Lawyer was professional.”

Using the information provided by the SBM member directory, Clarence and Beth select an attorney to help them with their wills and powers of attorney. They make an appointment and are on their way, confident that a qualified attorney will soon resolve their legal problems.

Help prospective clients like the Potters find you.

Click on the new, improved SBM member directory at <http://directory.michbar.org> powered by ZeekBeek to make your profile stand out. ■



Roberta M. Gubbins, Esq. practiced law before serving as the editor of the Ingham County Legal News. Since leaving the paper, she provides services as a ghostwriter, editing and writing articles,

blogs, and eblasts for lawyers and law firms. She is the editor of Briefs, the Ingham County Bar Association newsletter; and The Mentor, the SBM Master Lawyers Section newsletter.