

Top Skills for Attorneys

Table 2.1 (from Kiser, *Soft Skills for the Effective Lawyer*, 2017, Cambridge University Press)

Comparison of attorneys' and clients' competency rankings

Attorneys' rankings of competencies	Clients' ranking of competencies
Top ten competencies	
Legal expertise/competence; knowledge of applicable law	Ongoing communication with clients; keeping clients informed and updated on case status, progress, and new developments that could affect clients; promptly responding to client emails and telephone calls; asking questions and seeking information from clients
Honoring client confidentiality; keeping information confidential	Attentive listening skills
Punctuality/arriving on time for meetings, appointments, and hearings	Responsiveness to clients and their needs, interests, and goals; anticipation of client needs
Ability to determine appropriate risk mitigation strategies	Explanation of fee arrangements; accurate estimates of fees and costs and range of variance from estimates
Honoring commitments	Strategic problem solving, legal advice, and case/project management
Delegation to and management of support staff	Understanding of client needs, expectations, and priorities, including need for closure
Integrity and trustworthiness	Empathy and compassion
Ability to objectively assess the soundness of a deal or proposed solution in terms of risks and rewards	Respectfulness
Treating others with courtesy and respect	Legal expertise/thorough knowledge of law
Ability to prepare a case for trial	Trust

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