

Referrer Spotlight:

Marianne Card

Marianne Card is an associate attorney with G. Eric Nielson and Associates.

She graduated cum laude from the University of Utah with a bachelor's degree in Behavioral Science and Health. She then attended the J. Reuben Clark Law School at Brigham Young University and graduated cum laude.

Marianne began her law career at Heritage Law Offices and practiced in all facets of family law, with experience in district and juvenile court. She understands the challenges of divorce and co-parenting children during times of conflict.

After several years with the firm, Marianne moved to G. Eric Nielson and Associates, representing patients injured as a result of medical malpractice. Marianne enjoys the process of reviewing medical records, discovering what happened, and then creating a scenario that is understandable to a jury.

Outside of work, Marianne is married and enjoys spending time with her family. She also enjoys running, traveling, playing the piano, and reading.



Attorney Advantage

JAN
2023

HELPING ATTORNEYS BUILD BETTER FIRMS SO THEY LIVE BETTER LIVES

Rule #2 for Getting Paid 100%: Bill Regularly — at Least Once per Month

Last month's rule #1 was all about mindset and changing your mind about money and getting paid.

This month is about execution. Thought can take you only so far, and then you need to act.

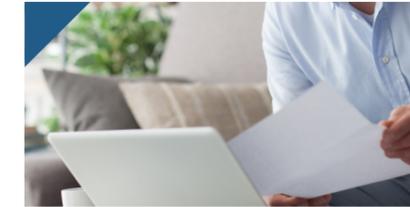
Do you know the on average time between when an attorney does work and bills an hour, until that attorney gets paid for that hour?

Answer: 170 days. Almost six months.

No good that can come of this.

When it comes to collecting, speed and consistency are paramount for a few reasons:

1. Clients want consistency, and they will become upset when they don't get it. I remember when I first started Brown Family Law. I would bill ever 2 to 4 months. There was no rhyme or reason to my billing. Clients hated it and would voice their displeasure often. They wanted me to communicate with them, even about billing, on a systemic basis.
2. The further removed the invoice is from when the work was done, the less likely it is that a client will pay it in full.
3. When you don't bill regularly, clients — correctly — assume you are disorganized, and clients tend not to trust disorganized attorneys.
4. You will feel guilty for not billing sooner, and you'll be more likely to write-off time to assuage your guilt.
5. If your client owes you money



at the end of a case because you haven't been diligent in sending out invoices, you're much more likely to get a 1-star Google review. Clients see 1-star reviews as a way to leverage you into giving them a write-off on any outstanding invoices in exchange for taking down the 1-star review.

With this in mind, I suggest you bill at least once per month. Now, you can bill more often than that. My friend, Jill Coil, bills every Monday, and that works for her. I tried that for a month, and my office manager threatened to quit. So, once a month it is for us. Very important tip: Create a system and block time to ensure billing is completed on-time.

Personally, I wake up at 4 a.m. on the first of every month and execute our billing SOP (standard operating procedure). By 7 a.m., when the kids get up, billing for the entire firm — as well as my family's monthly finances — are complete. Whatever your timeline, just make sure you stick to it. If you don't, days may bleed into more days, and maybe into weeks. And then, you may just say, "Well, I'm close enough already, I can just wait until next month to bill."

Don't do that!

Create a system. Set aside the time. Bill regularly — at least once per month.



Marco with the Famiglia Pirozzi in Naples, Italy, getting bespoke suits made. More on this experience in subsequent newsletters.

Restaurant Review



The Coffee Shop at Little America Hotel

A hop skip and jump from the Matheson Courthouse in Salt Lake is a gem of a lunch spot. It's the Coffee Shop at the Little America Hotel.

I can't tell you how many times I've eaten at this place, but I can tell you Daniel, a server, and I are on a first-name basis, and he knows to start my lunch with a Coke Zero no ice.

That's the level of service you get at the Coffee Shop, which is something I would expect at a much more expensive place.

And the food is good. From roast beef and chicken pot pie, to tasty sandwiches and burgers, to an array of salads, the Coffee Shop has something for everyone that needs a quick lunch after a hearing, or during the lunch hour at trial.

I want to take a moment and talk about the Cobb salad. I am a Cobb salad aficionado. Salads in general are okay, but a salad topped with eggs, blue cheese, bacon, avocado, chicken, tomatoes, and 4 large shrimp (that's right, shrimp), is a thing of girthy beauty.

The Cobb at the Coffee Shop is the best in Utah, bar none. Every element works. The blue cheese dressing works really well with the chicken and avocado, and the big, juicy shrimp really set this salad apart from other Cobbs. I look forward to eating it every time I go.

And, the kicker is the white, soft, buttery roll that accompanies ever entrée. Thing of beauty.

Go. Enjoy.

Employee Spotlight: Kody Harvey

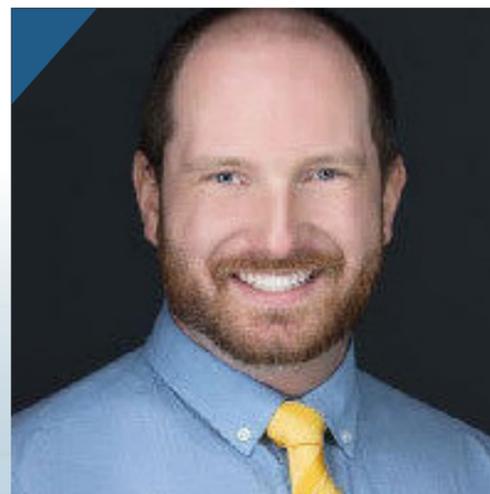
Kody is one of our newest team members.

We brought Kody on for a very specific purpose: To focus exclusively on our client's financial declarations and create alimony, standard of living, and child support analyses to help make judges' and commissioners' lives easier.

Before coming to us, Kody was CFO for a division of Sinclair Oil, as well as a financial manager for the State of Utah, where he oversaw a \$7-billion budget.

Kody enjoys working with numbers and statistics (bless him), and he also has a knack for implementing automation and procedures that help us to repeatedly produce accurate results for our clients.

When not at work, Kody enjoys golf, rock climbing, playing guitar, exploring new places, and experiencing new cultures.



5 Tips for Keeping your Team Happy in 2023

We're all looking for ways to retain great legal talent and keep our teams happy. Here are 5 tips for accomplishing that in 2023.

1. Supply your team's favorite drinks.

A few years ago, I was interviewing an attorney for an open position at Brown Family Law. At one point, he asked: "Do I have to pay for the office sodas if I work here?" He explained that his current firm charged all attorneys and staff \$1 for each soda they drank from the office supply. This is sheer stupidity. This type of nickel-and-diming team members just upsets them and makes them hate you.

Buy each person their favorite sodas and let them drink as much as they want. This is what we do. It's a small price to pay, and team members love it.

2. Compliment your individual team members on the regular.

Schedule time in your calendar to walk around and compliment individual team members. Take a few minutes and come up with specific things to compliment on so it's not some generic, "Thanks for the work you do."

3. Publicize your team's accomplishments.

When your team, or a member of your team, does something great, tell people about it. Tell other attorneys about it. Tell judges about it. Tell clients about it. Tell your team about it. Publicize the great work your people do.

4. Implement no gossip policy.

Gossip kills morale and teams. Don't accept it. Fire people who gossip and poison your culture. Your A-player team members will love you for getting rid of gossipers.

5. Pay your team more \$.

Your team deserves to be paid for the work they do, and they probably could use a raise. If possible, give them one. Money isn't everything, but it's a whole lot of something for most of your team.



Brown Family Law appreciates your referrals

We help our clients going through divorce maximize time with their children, and maximize their money

 **801-685-9999**

Best Business Book I've Ever Read

The Closer's Survival Guide

From when I started Brown Family Law in 2010, until about 2015, I knew nothing about business.

Not knowing how to run a business when you own a business is not a great situation, let me tell you. There were lots of months in which I had no idea how I would feed my family. I lived in constant stress and fear.

Eventually, I determined I didn't want to live in fear anymore, and I decided to figure out the business of law, so I turned to reading books.

Lots of books. So many books.

The best business book I have ever read is *The Closer's Survival Guide* by Grant Cardone.

The first part of the book is a masterclass on sales and closing, and as Grant explains, sales and closing are two completely different skill sets.

Sales is an emotional process, and it's all about listening and identifying the needs of a potential client (PC), providing solutions for those needs, and getting PC to trust you. Having done that, PC will want to hire you, and this is where closing comes in.

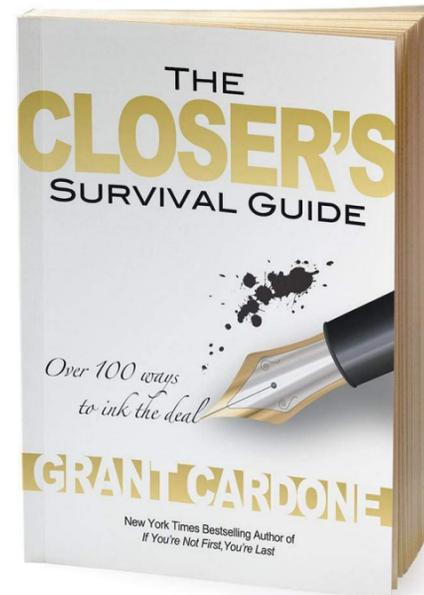
Closing is the process of getting someone to exchange money for your lawyer services. This is a logical process, as opposed to the emotional process that is selling.

Closing is where you overcome specific objections, you handle emotional outbursts, and you persist until PC pays your retainer and becomes a client.

I know many attorneys who are good at sales, and I know almost no attorneys who are good at closing. Closing is the most difficult aspect of acquiring clients, and it requires training and role-playing.

With difficult comes opportunity. If you master closing, you will make more money than you can by mastering any other aspect of lawyering.

The genius of *The Closer's Survival Guide* is the second half of the book, which is comprised of almost every conceivable specific objection a PC may voice, and specific ways to overcome those objections.



For example, Grant includes seven ways to deal with the most common objection we encounter as attorneys: "That's a lot of money. I can't afford that."

Why seven ways to address one objection? Because each PC is different, and you need a big repository of closes to pick the right one for a particular PC.

I have read *The Closer's Survival Guide* 24 times over the years.

I used it as the basis for writing my own book about how to overcome the specific objections we encounter as divorce attorneys, and those closes have enabled us to help over 4000 people through divorce.

Now, every morning, as a law firm, we train and role-play overcoming those objections so we can close PCs and serve them as clients.

None of this would have been possible without *The Closer's Survival Guide*. It is the best, most practical business book I have ever read.

P.S.: If you would like a copy of *The Closer's Survival Guide*, reach out. I give copies to colleagues all the time.

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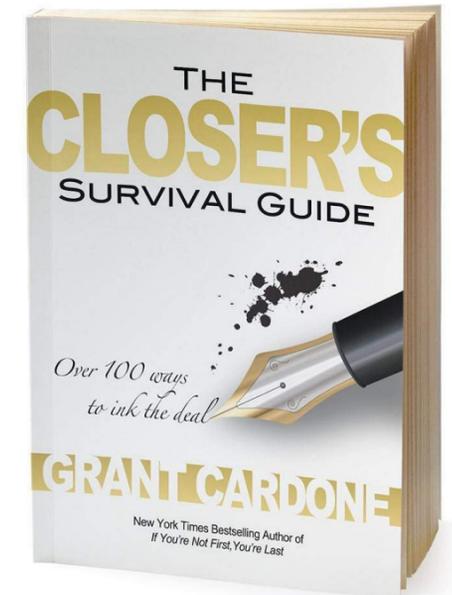
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Time: Your Most Valuable Asset in the New Year

We've all heard the adage: Time is money.

It's true, but almost no attorney knows just how valuable his/her time actually is. That's a shame, because not knowing what your time is worth leads to you wasting a great deal of it.

One of the techniques that has helped me use my time much more effectively is determining the actual dollar value of an hour of my time.

Here's the equation. Don't worry, it's simple.

Targeted yearly income / Productive hours worked in a year = \$ Value of your productive hour

- Targeted yearly income is straightforward: It's what you want to make in a year. For example, let's say you want to make \$1 million — come on, think big.
- Productive hours worked in a year is a little more complicated. Here's how you figure that out:
 1. Take the days you work and multiply them by 8, which is the average number of hours attorneys work per day. Let's say you take two weeks of vacation per year, that would be 226 days worked per year, and 1808 hours.
 2. Then, take those hours and apply a productivity ratio, essentially the percentage of your time that's spent productively. Most lawyers are actually quite unproductive, but let's say you're really productive and use a 50% (.5) ratio. So, that would be $1808 \times .5 = 904$ hours.

Using those numbers, this would be the calculation:

$\$1,000,000 / 904 \text{ hours} = \1106 per productive hour, or $\$18.43$ per minute.

Et voilà! You know the actual dollar value of your time.

Now, you know that every minute scrolling Instagram or glancing at your email for the 57th time before noon costs you $\$18.43$.

When you look at your time this way, you'll start controlling it much better, and using it for only your most effective tasks.



Controlling time this way will have a few likely consequences for you:

1. You'll make more money since you'll focus on the most effective and profitable tasks in your law firm.
2. You'll have more free time with family since you won't do menial, low-value, time-wasting tasks.
3. You'll enjoy what you do more because you're not doing those menial tasks you dislike.

I can't imagine a better way to start 2023 than knowing how valuable your time is and acting on it.

Warning: Knowing the value of your time may cause you to resent those who waste your time with quotidian and low-value tasks. Honestly, wasting time on such tasks should frustrate you, but don't take out your frustration on others. Instead, use that frustration to offload low-value tasks to those who should be doing them, and then use your time on only your highest-value tasks.

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