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**ABA** LAW PRACTICE MANAGEMENT SECTION  
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# Law Practice TODAY

## Your Most Important Marketing Copy — What Your Bills Say

*Bob Weiss*

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The most important marketing copy you write isn't on your Web site. It isn't what you say in your firm brochure or in your latest proposal.

It's in your monthly bill.

General counsel, chief executives, and financial officers tell us they routinely get long-winded promotional brochures and expanded service proposals from law firms they use, and from those that want to get their attention. They also say these materials often provide little information that makes much of difference in their selection of counsel, or in the decision to maintain their relationship with a firm or refer that firm to someone else.

They further report that up-to-date information on legal issues affecting their day-to-day operations, either on a Web site or in the form of an electronic or printed newsletter, is much more valuable to them. So are brief explanations of transactions or litigation in which your firm has been involved.

But the single most important promotional copy you produce every month—what amounts to a monthly direct mail piece every client carefully reads—is your invoice. And, general counsel and executives want it to clearly explain what you have done.

"It should tell me the story of that month's work from beginning to end," one recently told us. "If we can't discern what was done and by whom it undoes a lot of the good work and results by that outside counsel," said another.

Poorly worded or vague billing causes a client to question both the value and quality of your services. Every lawyer carefully reviews and edits filings, correspondence and many do the same with new alerts and brochure copy—do you have the same exacting standards for your billing?

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Robert A. Weiss  
President Alyn-Weiss & Associates, Inc.

• **Marketing/Public Relations**  
**1331 - 17th Street, Suite 410**  
**Denver, Colorado 80202**

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