

The VALUE Mini-Guide

A quick-start guide for practitioners ready to price on value, not time.



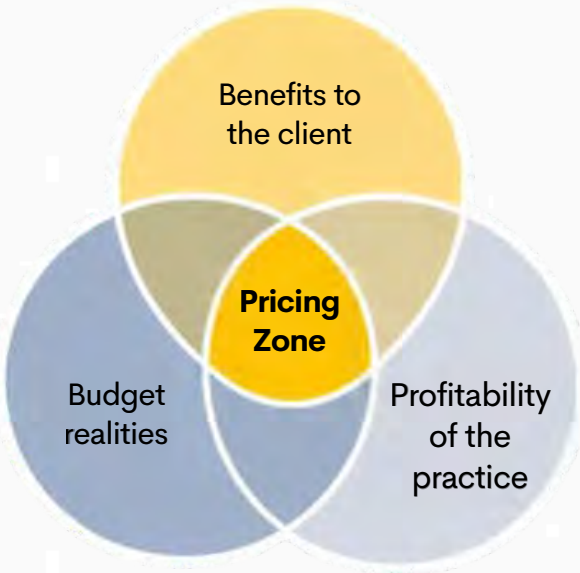
When I opened my firm right out of law school, I did the math and realized I couldn't afford to be my own client if I billed hourly. So I set out to figure out what clients were really buying.

The Big Idea: Clients Aren't Buying Time

They are buying relief, protection, and peace of mind. Value-based pricing aligns your fee with the outcome your client cares about, not the minutes tracked.

The Pricing Zone

Every price should live in the overlap of three factors:



The VALUE Framework at a Glance

V — **Verify the Real Problem**
What does the client care about?

A — **Assemble the Service Options**
What's included, and what's not?

L — **Link Value to Price**
How do I position the price so the value is obvious?

U — **Understand What It Takes to be Profitable**
Can my practice sustain these prices?

E — **Execute and Educate**
How do I present the options and help clients choose?

Start with one type of matter

Pick a matter you know cold, run it through all five steps, and test it with real clients. Then repeat the framework for the next type of matter. You don't need to overhaul your whole practice overnight

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V Verify the Real Problem

What does the client care about?

What a client asks for first is rarely the whole story.

"I need a will" often means "I need to know my kids will be okay." When you slow down to hear what's beneath the request, your pricing is rooted in what the client values, your scope becomes sharper

How to do it:

1. **Listen for the pain point.**
   Ask what worries them most and what would feel like relief once this is handled.

2. **Look for patterns.**
   Over time, what individual clients worry about creates the ideal client you'll design service options for.

3. **Write your Client Impact Statement.**
   "I help [ideal client] [solve X problem] so they can [achieve Y relief]."

Example: *"I help young parents protect their kids if the worst happens so they can sleep better at night."*

BEFORE YOU MOVE ON

- ☐ The most common pain points your clients face
- ☐ At least five specific ways you solve a client's problem
- ☐ A one-sentence Client Impact Statement

A Assemble the Service Options

What's included, and what's not?

Scope has three dimensions.

- **Deliverables:** What you do
- **Client Experience:** How you do it
- **Emotional Benefit:** How clients feel when it's done

How to do it:

1. **Take inventory.**
   List everything you offer for the type of matter across all three dimensions.

2. **Map the matter.**
   Core steps in nearly every matter are in your Standard option. Common branches become add-ons or are built into Premium. Uncommon branches become renegotiation triggers you name in the engagement agreement. Scalable steps are lighter in Essential and heavier in Premium

3. **Build from the middle out.**
   Assemble Standard first: what most clients need. Scale up to Premium: the best version of your help. Then scale down to Essential: cut until the next cut would leave the client exposed; then stop

BEFORE YOU MOVE ON

- ☐ Two to four options, each clearly different in all three dimensions and built for one of the clients above
- ☐ The Layperson Test: someone outside the legal profession could tell why one option costs more than another

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L Link Value to Price

How do I choose a price so the value is obvious?

Clients compare the price to something. Anchoring intentionally guides it.

See a $65 steak on the menu, and the $32 salmon suddenly seems reasonable. Service options work the same way. The first price a client sees shapes how they read every other price, so present your Premium option first.



TIP

Lead with the Premium option. It sets the value anchor and makes the other choices feel reasonable.

1. **Price Premium first.**
   This is your confidence price. What number might make the client pause, then say yes once they see everything included? Write it down. Don't agonize.
2. **Price Standard.**
   Most clients land here. Price it to reflect the full value of solving their problem well.
3. **Price Essential.**
   Essential is competing with doing nothing. Price it low enough to ease resistance and high enough to sustain the work.
4. **Run a sanity check.**
   Leave real distance between the prices. At $1,000, $1,200, and $1,400, clients see three versions of the same thing and default to the cheapest.

U Understand What it Takes to be Profitable

Can my practice sustain these prices?

Work backward from what the practice needs.

1. **Use real numbers.**
   Pull your bank statements. Set a profit margin intentionally; 5% to 10% is a good place to start.
2. **Run an Effort Audit.**
   Break the matter into phases and estimate the time, energy, and disruption for each. Two matters with the same hours can cost you very different amounts
3. **Run the Checkpoint.**
   Is that caseload realistic given your schedule and your Effort Audit? Do you have the lead flow to support it?
4. **If the math doesn't add up, pull a lever**
   Adjust the scope, improve efficiency, lean on your team, or cut expenses.

Pre-tax pay	=	Take-home pay ÷ (1 – tax rate)
Required gross revenue	=	(Pre-tax pay + operating expenses) × (1 + profit margin)
Required cases per year	=	Required gross revenue ÷ average case value

Divide by 12 for cases per month, or by 48 for cases per week (because you should be taking time off).

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Execute and Educate

How do I present the options and help clients choose?

Clients say yes when they feel in control of the decision and the options fit their goals.

Handing a client three price tags and asking which one they want puts the hardest part of the decision on them. Your job is to connect each option to what the client told you matters most, both before and after the consultation.

Before the consultation

- **Let your website educate.**
  Describe your service options by what clients receive, not by the tasks you perform. Add prices, price ranges, or starting prices when you're ready.
- **Screen for fit.**
  An intake form or a few qualifying questions save you from spending consultations on people who will never say yes.

During the consultation

- **Replay the problem.**
  Before showing any options, play back what the client needs solved in their own words. When clients hear their words, they feel heard and lean in.
- **Introduce the options with emotional framing.**
  Start with Premium. Walk through each option by the problem it solves and the client it's built for, not as a list of deliverables.
- **Recommend and invite a decision.**
  Name the option you'd recommend and why, then ask: "Does that feel like the right fit for where you're at?" You guide. They decide.

After the consultation

- **Send a summary within twenty-four hours.**
  Confirm the option they chose, what's included, the fee and payment terms, and next steps.
- **Make the engagement agreement an educational tool.**
  Use the same names and language. Cover what's included, what's not, the fees, when they're earned, and what happens if the engagement ends early.
- **Build a feedback loop.**
  Ask every prospect, "Which option felt like the best fit for your situation, and why?" When the matter wraps up, ask every client, "How did the price you paid compare to the value you received? Was it a steal, just right, or too much?" If most say it was a steal, raise your prices.

When a client pushes back

"Why would I pay you when I can get a template online?" is a chance to educate, not defend. The template gives them a document. You give them judgment, protection, and the peace of mind that it's done right.

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Launch It: Your Sixty-Day Test Run

Don't overthink the rollout. Pick one type of matter. Test it with clients. Get feedback. Refine. Then expand. The goal is learning, not perfection.

QUICK START CHECKLIST: READY TO LAUNCH?

- [ ] Type of matter selected
- [ ] Service options and prices defined
- [ ] Revenue target and caseload confirmed
- [ ] Website describes what clients receive
- [ ] Screening step in place
- [ ] Consultation script written and practiced out loud
- [ ] 24-hour summary and engagement agreement match the consultation
- [ ] Pricing Feedback file set up and reviews scheduled on the calendar

Keep It Running

- **Offer your new options to the next ten qualified prospects** for the type of matter you chose. Keep everything else the same so you can identify what made the difference.
- **Keep a Pricing Feedback file.** After each consultation, record which option they chose, what mattered most, and what confused them.
- **Check in weekly, then review on day sixty.** Open your feedback file, pricing, and numbers. Adjust one thing at a time. After that, review every quarter.

Remember...

1. **Price the relief, not the hours.** Clients pay for the problem solved and the peace of mind they leave with. How long it takes isn't part of their equation.
2. **Give clients choices.** Thoughtful options with clear differences let clients decide what they can afford, instead of deciding for them.
3. **Start small and keep learning.** One type of matter. One sixty-day test run. Then refine and repeat.



Ready for the full framework?

This five-page guide gives you the highlights. My book, *Value Over Time: An Impact-Driven Approach to Pricing Legal Services*, walks through every step in depth so you can confidently price based on value.

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