

THE BEST KIND OF THANK YOU

Social Proof and the Future Health of Our Firm

On the top of the bookshelf in my office, there sits a collection of thank-you cards. These are cards I've received from clients and I cherish each of them. Even after many years, I can't seem to bring myself to discard them. Nothing makes me feel better about the work I do than reading a heartfelt, handwritten thank-you card from a client. Knowing that I (or more often, my staff) was instrumental in helping the client find a solution, bring closure to a difficult time in their lives, or simply bring them peace of mind because of our efforts really makes my day!

Yes, I like earning a living, too, but the money received from fees doesn't warm me up quite the same way. We all need money to live, but the gratitude of a client we helped keeps the fire stoked for me. But, I am sad to report these private thank-you cards are the relics of a day gone by and do little to promote the future health of our law firm. Today, reviews are the type of thank you businesses covet. They have become the holy grail for many businesses.

In today's internet marketplace, most people now look at reviews before they make any type of purchase. Want to go to a restaurant? Go to Yelp to see what other customers have to say about that new Mexican place on the corner. Thinking of buying a camera on Amazon? Check online to see what people are saying about both the camera and the seller's return policy. Hurt in a car accident and need a personal injury lawyer? Go to Google or Avvo and see how many five-star ratings the lawyer has received.

"Social proof," as the theory has been coined, is any piece of evidence from consumers that verifies whatever it is the seller is selling. Whether it be a great camera, a mouthwatering burrito, or a "pit bull" lawyer, today's consumers need social proof before they make a purchase. The digital marketplace has been great for consumers and a rude awakening for lazy and unscrupulous businesses. If you own a business and you're lousy at what you do, you will be exposed, and you will die on the vine soon enough. However, it's no longer enough to be great at what you do. Business owners in every field need to care about their clients, make great efforts to give them what they are expecting, and be agile enough to adapt their business practices to address problems as they arise. But if they want to thrive, they must have online visibility with social proof.



At Spada Law Group, in addition to ensuring we are providing our clients with top-notch legal representation, we must also be mindful that potential future clients are searching online for lawyers who have social proof. We need to be visible online so these potential future clients can find us. To do that, we ask clients to take time out of their lives to leave us a review. This is a big ask, I know. People are busy, and they don't want to carve out time to draft a review. We understand that, but we believe we have an obligation to ask and try.

We are in the business of helping people stand up to large insurance companies when they are hurt in an accident and want to get compensation they deserve. We believe we are very good at helping people do this. So, isn't it our obligation to make sure people know we exist? That we are good at what we do? I believe it is. That is why you probably have noticed we have more Google and Avvo reviews than we did last year. We didn't just start being good lawyers; we just started asking clients to tell us what they think of us.

It's tough to face the scrutiny of clients, but it serves two very good purposes. First, it allows us to let other people know they can entrust us with their legal problems. This scrutiny also allows us to continue working on areas we may need improvement. It's a win-win situation. A great review does much to benefit our firm and others seeking quality representation, but they will never replace the old fashioned, handwritten thank-you notes that touch my heart.

Although we at Spada Law Group have plenty of five-star reviews we are proud of, I still value my handwritten thank-you cards because they are my private social proof that we did good work! We eased somebody's burden, and that always makes me smile.

-Len Spada

HELP FROM START TO FINISH

LEONOR PEREZ MAKES SURE NO ONE GOES EMPTY-HANDED

No one wants to call an attorney or walk into a personal injury law firm. If you find yourself in this situation, it usually means your life has taken a difficult turn. At Spada Law Group, we're aware of this and aim to make sure every step of our clients' journeys with us, from start to finish, is as reassuring as possible. This mission is easy when the first person many of our clients meet is our Intake Coordinator, Leonor Perez.

Leonor was referred to us 13 years ago when we were looking for a receptionist who could speak Spanish. When Leonor came in to interview, it was clear she was more than a perfect fit. In addition to being bilingual and hardworking, Leonor is also incredibly empathetic. She readily connects with clients when they're in pain and opens her heart to others. On the same day she interviewed, we called to offer her the position. We couldn't let someone as amazing as Leonor get away.

Over the years, Leonor's responsibilities have grown, and she earned the title of Intake Coordinator. She handles many tasks, including going through all the information we receive from potential clients to determine whether we're equipped to take their case. Unfortunately, we can't help every person who walks through the door. But even when we can't take their case, Leonor tries to make sure no one goes away empty-handed.

She is trained to identify those cases that we do not handle so that we can refer the client to a trusted partner firm for assistance with their legal needs. Her priority is always to help other people.



"When new clients come in, I can see how scared they are, especially the clients who only speak Spanish," Leonor says. "For a lot of them, this is their first car accident. They don't know what to do. I love seeing the relief on their faces when they realize there's someone at the front desk who can speak their native language. Whether clients speak Spanish or English, I want them to know they can talk to me like a friend. We're here to help every step of the way; we take care of the paperwork so our clients can take care of themselves."

When Leonor isn't at the front desk taking care of clients, she's either lost in a good book or hanging out at home with her husband, son, and their three little dogs, Peanut, Heaven, and Bear.

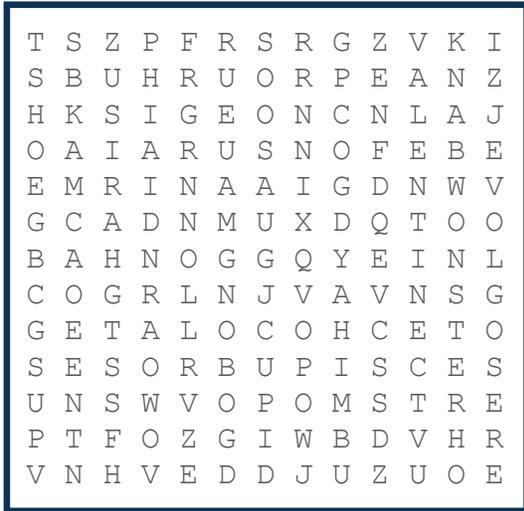
REVIEW OF THE MONTH



"My family was having an issue related to education law, not an area of specialty for Spada Law Group, but I took a chance and reached out. The response and advice I received was more than I could have anticipated. From the initial phone call with the office staff, Leonor, to the personal contacts Attorney Spada leveraged to provide me with a list of several reputable special education attorneys who could help my family, the response was incredible. I felt the staff took a sincere interest in my issue and went above and beyond to provide me with appropriate resources who may be able to resolve the issues my family was dealing with. People turn to attorneys during difficult times in their lives, and Spada Law Group provided incredible and compassionate service during a difficult time for my family."

—Anthony
Dec. 11, 2019

WORD SEARCH



- AQUARIUS
- ASH
- CHOCOLATE
- CUPID
- DONOR
- GROUNDHOG
- LOVE
- PISCES
- PRESIDENTS
- ROMANCE
- ROSES
- SKIING
- SNOWBANK
- SUGAR
- VALENTINE

Help Us HELP YOU

‘Full Coverage’ Is Never Enough

Recently, we took on two clients with very similar cases. They both had been injured in a car accident, both had medical bills exceeding \$50,000, and in both cases, the at-fault driver only carried \$20,000 in liability coverage, the minimum allowed in Massachusetts. However, at the end of each case, one client was left with thousands in medical bills while the other had all her bills covered by a combination of insurance from the at-fault driver and her own auto insurance. Why did such similar cases have very different outcomes? Because these clients had purchased different amounts of underinsured motorist coverage for their own policies.

The first client purchased only the minimum of \$20,000 in underinsured coverage for her own policy. So, even after we made the insurance companies (both our client’s and the at-fault driver’s) do everything they were legally obligated to do, she still had unpaid medical bills and lost wages. When our client saw the burden she was left with, she shook her head and said, “But I have full coverage!”

Contrary to popular belief, full coverage doesn’t mean you have the most insurance coverage you can possibly have for all circumstances; it simply means you have comprehensive and collision coverage in addition to liability coverage. Comprehensive and collision coverages relate to damage to your vehicle. People often get confused and wrongly believe that if they have “full coverage,” then they are fully protected from personal injury damages caused by others. They are not. To provide yourself with some level of protection from injury damages caused by an “underinsured” vehicle, you must purchase sufficient “underinsured coverage” on your own policy. And the amount you purchase must exceed the liability limits of the person who caused your injuries.

Our second client did just that when she raised her underinsured motorist coverage to \$100,000. Because she had this coverage, we were able to get her insurance company to pay for all the remaining medical bills and then some. She collected the \$20,000 minimum liability limits from the at-fault driver and another \$80,000 (for a total of the \$100,000 in underinsured limits she purchased) from her own insurance company. Very similar cases, similar injuries, but dramatically different settlements.

Having this much coverage sounds like it should be much more expensive. But it is not. Insurance companies don’t want you to know that once you have coverage, raising that coverages usually raise your premiums by a very modest amount. You could go from having \$20,000 in underinsured motorist coverage to having \$100,000 in coverage with only a small increase in your yearly premium. It’s almost always worth it to do so.

‘Will my insurance protect me and my family?’

Not sure if you have enough car insurance? We can help! Send Len an email at [lspada@spadalawgroup.com](mailto: lspada@spadalawgroup.com) with a copy of your insurance Declaration Page, and we will do a **free** insurance evaluation for you. We can advise you on how to get the most out of your insurance to make sure that if you need help, your insurance company is legally obligated to take care of you.

Local Chef’s Corner

Valentine’s Day Strawberry Shortcake

Inspired by The New York Times

INGREDIENTS

- 4 cups ripe strawberries
- 1/2 cup and 3 tbsp sugar, divided
- 4 cups flour
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 5 tsp baking powder
- 1 1/4 cups butter
- 3 cups whipping cream
- 1/4 tsp vanilla extract
- 2 tbsp sugar (optional)

DIRECTIONS

1. Rinse, hull (remove green stem), and slice strawberries. Using a fork, gently crush a quarter of the strawberries to release their juices. Mix with remaining berries and 1/2 cup of sugar. Cover and set aside for 30 minutes.
2. Heat oven to 450 F.
3. In a large mixing bowl, sift together flour, 3 tbsp sugar, salt, and baking powder. Add 3/4 cup of softened butter and rub into dry ingredients. Mix in 1 1/4 cups cream to form a soft dough.
4. Knead dough for 1 minute, then roll out to 1/2-inch thickness. Using a 3-inch round cutter, cut out an even number of rounds (2 per serving).
5. Grease a baking sheet with butter and place half of the rounds onto the sheet. Melt remaining butter and brush a little on each round. Place the remaining rounds on top. Bake for 10–15 minutes or until golden brown.
6. Remove shortcakes from oven and carefully pull them apart. Brush the insides with remaining melted butter.
7. Beat remaining cream until it starts to get frothy. Add vanilla (and 2 tbsp sugar if using) and beat again until firm peaks form.
8. Place bottom half of shortcake on a plate, and top with a large spoonful of strawberries. Cover with top half of shortcake, then top with more berries and a dollop of whipped cream. Serve immediately to your special someone.

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WELLNESS AND WHISKERS

3 WAYS TO WORK OUT WITH YOUR PET

Creating a healthy lifestyle is often easier with support, but if you're struggling to find someone to join you on your path to wellness, then look to your furry friends instead. Read on for some ways to get active with your pet, and learn more about their wellness and health at PetMD.com.

Racking Up the Miles

A simple way to get moving with your pet is to go for a walk. If you're looking for a bigger challenge, then try running, biking, or hiking with your pet. Anything beyond a walk may require extra obedience training or equipment — like a specialty tool that prevents your pet from colliding with your bike — but after a few loops around the trail, your pet will be begging to go again. And how can you say no to that face? Plus, this idea isn't just for dogs. You can find leashes and harnesses for cats, lizards, ferrets, and other pets that love to get fresh air.

Going for a Swim

If you have a dog that appears to be more fish than canine, swimming might be the workout for you! Swimming is a joint-



friendly cardiovascular exercise that works your entire body. If you're not one for a dip in the pool, then kayaking, canoeing, and paddleboarding are great for your arms and core. Meanwhile, your pet can enjoy a relaxing ride or an exciting game of fetch. Just be sure to secure your pet with a life jacket before you and your four-legged friend splash away!

Keeping It Traditional

If you want a good full-body workout while entertaining your pet, then consider including them in traditional exercises. Entertain your pup with a game of fetch and drop down for a burpee every time it runs away. Balance your bird on your shoulder while you squat and lunge. Mentally and physically stimulate your cat by dragging a string around your body during Russian twists. With a little creativity and a few of your pet's favorite things, both of you can work up a sweat.