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Brief Wins or Your Money Back

Hey, it works for used-car dealers and stereo salespeople—why not lawyers?

Crashing through yet another self-important, uptight, musty old legal profession taboo, a group of attorneys in Melville, N.Y., is offering their work with a little something extra: a guarantee.

Yes, if a client purchases an appellate brief from Lawfinders Associates LLC and it doesn't win, the client gets its money back — 100 percent. No questions asked.

“The idea was, ‘Let's get people exposed to what we do,’” said Robert J. Scott, president of Lawfinders. “Even if we lose, we win a customer. They say, ‘Not only did these guys give me a fair shake, but they did what they said they'd do.’”

And the clients, said Mr. Scott, are flocking. Ever since unveiling its Guaranteed Appellate Brief Program in January, Lawfinders has sold more than 100 units. The success rate? “I'll tell you this,” said Mr. Scott, “we have returned some money. I predict we're going to lose 10 to 20 percent of

the time. You can't always predict the judge.”

The program isn't offered for every type of appellate brief; even Lawfinders is not crazy enough to guarantee criminal cases. Mr. Scott said that most of his customers, who tend to be sole practitioners and in-house lawyers too busy to prepare their own appellate briefs, offer commercial litigation cases with \$250,000 and \$1 million at stake.

Although the five attorneys at Lawfinders conduct legal research and prepare a variety of litigation documents, it is not technically a law firm, said Mr. Scott. Because Lawfinders' only clients are other lawyers, it is able to use a trade name rather than the partners' last names.

“I simply don't have the time to do all of my own legal research,” said Bruce S. Bandes, a West Sayville, N.Y., admiralty specialist who has practiced for 29 years and is a satisfied Lawfinder customer. I'm a solo practitioner and I'm up to my eyeballs in work.”

—*Mike France*