



The Hidden Strategy Behind Expert Selection in Complex Litigation

When attorneys think about finding an [expert witness](#), the instinct is often to look for the most credentialed name in the field. But according to [Erica Evans](#), Senior Director of Expert Services at IMS Legal Strategies, that is not always what makes an expert effective in complex litigation.

In a [recent IMS Elevate interview](#) led by [Marie-Petra Adams](#), Vice President of Client Experience, Erica explained that “every case is different,” and that a large part of her team’s role is helping clients think not just about what type of expertise the case needs but also who might be the best expert to clearly communicate with the judge or jury.

It Starts with a Conversation

Erica described the earliest stage of the process as the “expert specification call,” where the team works to understand the case, the issues at hand, the arguments, and their client’s position. The central question becomes “who is the ideal expert to explain the issues credibly and clearly?” because the most qualified person on paper is not always the best fit.

She also noted that expert witness selection is “typically equal parts qualifications, expertise, credibility, communication, and relatability,” and that the top expert witness recruiters are able to evaluate everything from litigation and subject matter experience, to “how an expert may present under pressure.”

Expert Alignment in Action

A Dinosaur Fossil Dispute

Erica discussed a previous expert witness search for a dispute over [fossil custody and ownership](#). The challenge, she said, was finding someone with “the right combination of

scientific, practical, and litigation credibility” who could speak to the science but also function well in a legal setting.

She added that fields like paleontology can involve “strong opinions or disagreements,” which often become clear once a client interviews the candidate directly. As Erica summarized it, the real test is not who is the smartest person in the field, but rather who can explain the issue in a way that is credible and understandable for both legal and lay audiences, from opposing counsel in early hearings to jurors at trial. Ultimately, the ideal expert was found and engaged, and the case settled favorably for our client.

Medical Device Patent Litigation

Erica also referenced a second expert search that combined [engineering, medicine, and intellectual property](#) expertise. The client firm needed an expert who could speak to “what constitutes a reasonable prior art search,” ideally with prior art experience and trial testimony history.

Erica emphasized that conflict analysis can be “a major part of vetting” in matters like this, since top experts in their field may have connections to successful companies who may be a party in the suit or otherwise connected in some way. The case ultimately resolved favorably for our client, with a nine-figure verdict after the jury found the infringement intentional.

Securing Both Clarity and Credentials

Across these two case examples, Erica returned to the same idea: “effective expert strategy often comes down to clarity.” She shared that in complicated matters, an expert must often “function like an educator,” translating complexity for people who are not specialists themselves.

Balancing expertise requirements with educational capabilities, IMS utilizes a custom process honed over decades to deliver world-class experts aligned to each case.



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- 1. Search:** Our custom expert witness search team draws on a global network and proprietary AI-powered search tools to identify the best expert candidates, going beyond simple keyword matching to evaluate industry relevance and litigation context.

2. **Vet:** IMS recruiters assess not just expert credentials and academic/industry backgrounds, but also personal disposition, testimony history, and communication skills—qualities Erica deemed essential in the examples.
3. **Align:** IMS remains aligned and provides support for the duration of expert witness engagements to ensure a smooth experience for all parties.

What emerged from the conversation between Erica and Marie-Petra, and what drives our process, is more than “just find the best expert.” It is the understanding that expertise is only useful once it has been translated into clear evidence. That is what enables attorneys and juries to make informed decisions in complex litigation.

IMS Legal Strategies is a trusted partner to law firms and corporations worldwide, providing the expertise and technology needed to solve complex challenges and position disputes for the best possible outcomes. Our integrated consulting and expert witness solutions span the full litigation lifecycle, helping clients develop informed strategies and present cohesive narratives. We maintain rigorous procedures to protect confidentiality, expert credibility, and case integrity.

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