

# 10 Steps to Getting a 10

Why an AVVO rating matters  
and how to get the right rating  
for your experience

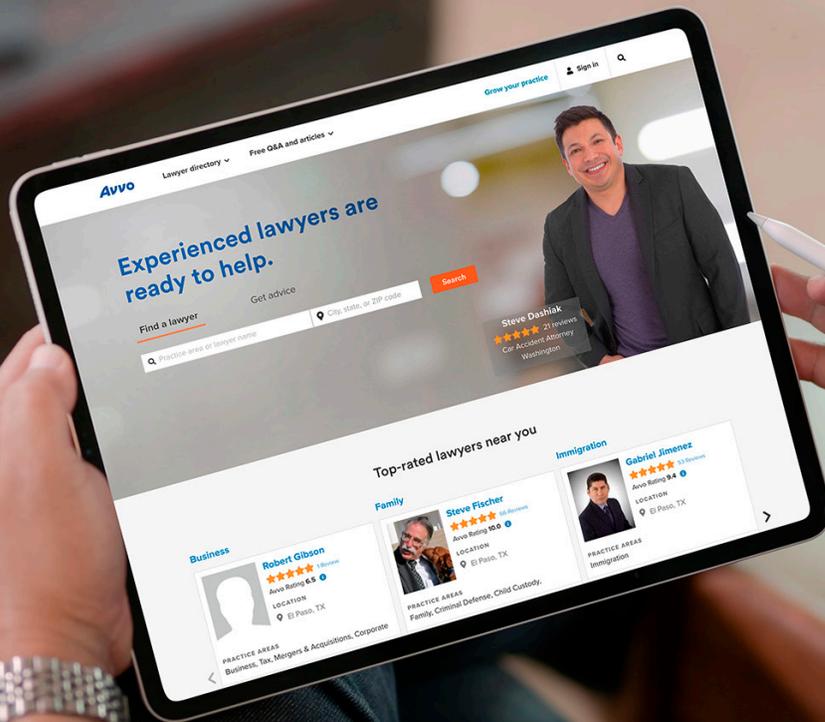
**AGIMarketing**



# Table of Contents

---

<b>What Is Avvo And Why Does It Matter</b> .....	<b>1</b>
The Avvo Rating System .....	2
<b>Completing Your Profile</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>Step 2 Understanding Each Section</b> .....	<b>4</b>
Headshot .....	4
Client Reviews .....	4
Practice Areas .....	5
Attorney Endorsements .....	5
Contact Information .....	5
Resume .....	6
<b>Step 3 Pros and Cons to Avvo Advanced</b> .....	<b>7</b>
Pros to Avvo Advanced .....	7
Cons to Avvo Advanced .....	7
Avvo Advertising .....	7
<b>Step 4 Getting Client Reviews</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>Step 5 Contributing On Avvo</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>Step 6 Peer Endorsements</b> .....	<b>10</b>
Choosing The Right Options .....	10
<b>Step 7 Learning To Love Avvo</b> .....	<b>11</b>
Free Advertising .....	11
<b>Step 8 Building Your Web Presence</b> .....	<b>12</b>
Linking To Your Websites And Blogs .....	12
<b>Step 9 Avoiding Disasters</b> .....	<b>13</b>
Handling Negative Reviews .....	13
The Problem With The Avvo Badge .....	14
<b>Step 10 Final Thoughts</b> .....	<b>15</b>
Frequently Asked Questions.....	15



# What is **AVVO** and why does it matter?

Avvo.com is an online database of attorneys that provides marketing information and a ranking system for searchers.

It began as a search option to find both lawyers and doctors, but quickly moved to just the legal field. Many attorneys are hesitant to get involved with AVVO. Whether it is because they aren't tech savvy or simply do not believe in a ranking system that is based on an algorithm instead of true experience and background, lawyers often do not claim their profile. The problem is that AVVO lists - and ranks you regardless of whether you claim your profile. An AVVO profile can then show up in your search engine results

giving potential clients a first impression that may not be a favorable one.

While you may feel forced to use AVVO, the reality is that it could be bad for business if you fail to claim your profile and fill it out completely. Your ranking depends on a number of things, including accuracy and detail. This guide will give you 10 comprehensive steps to completing your profile and moving toward the coveted 10.0 rating on AVVO. We will help you understand the AVVO rating system and why certain steps are more important than others.

# The AVVO Rating System

---

The AVVO Rating is a 1 to 10 scale as listed.

10.0 - 9.0	Superb
8.9 - 8.0	Excellent
7.9 - 7.0	Very Good
6.9 - 6.0	Good
5.9 - 5.0	Average
4.9 - 4.0	Concern
3.9 - 3.0	Caution
2.9 - 2.0	Strong Caution
1.9 - 1.0	Extreme Caution



The AVVO rating system is based on a mathematical algorithm that places a large emphasis on an attorney's background, discipline, and experience.

While AVVO is a free service for attorneys and consumers, the truth is that it can be helpful to purchase AVVO Advanced, which we will discuss in detail on page 7.

Unlike Martindale-Hubbell, the AVVO rating system is not based on peer reviews. Other attorneys are the ones who endorse you and help you achieve your 10.0 AVVO rating. While most attorneys respect and value Martindale-Hubbell Peer Review Ratings, most consumers who are looking to hire an attorney don't consider it. More often than not, consumers are seeing AVVO ratings when searching for an attorney and using that to base their decision. This is why it is crucial that you utilize AVVO to your benefit and use it as a marketing tool.

The AVVO rating is based on information that AVVO sources from attorney websites, such as the State Bar, as well as information provided directly from the attorney. Ensuring your profile is complete and accurate is crucial to your success as an unclaimed profile may not contain correct information, thus hurting your business.

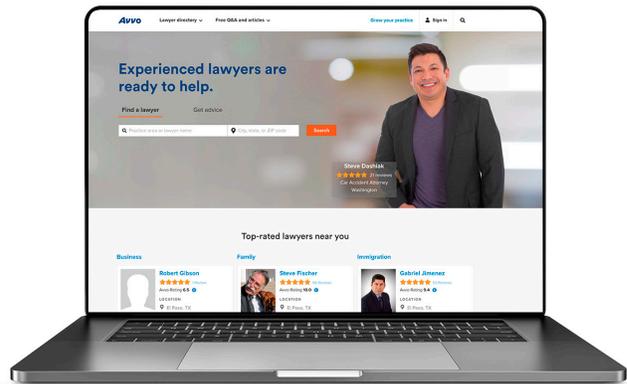
An AVVO Profile is broken into a number of categories. Each category can affect your overall rating but the exact weight each category is given remains undisclosed. Still, we have come to identify many of the key factors that help boost your score and will share them throughout this guide.



# Completing your Profile

This may seem like a no-brainer, but the first thing you need to do is claim your AVVO Profile. In most cases, you will already have an unclaimed profile listed on AVVO.

- 1 Go to [www.avvo.com](http://www.avvo.com)
- 2 Enter in your name in the search box



- 3 Your profile will come up. If your profile is not found, contact AVVO Support at <https://support.avvo.com/hc/en-us/requests/new>. The profile below shows an example of an unclaimed profile. You can claim yours by clicking the orange button near the center of the page. You will then choose a claim method through LinkedIn, Facebook, email, or phone.
- 4 Be sure that you have some time to fill out your profile once you claim it. You will want to fill it out as completely as possible, which will likely take much more than AVVO's estimated completion time of 10 minutes.

# Understanding Each Section

## Headshot

Having a professional headshot taken is something that every attorney should do regardless of whether they plan on using AVVO. A headshot puts a face to a name and helps increase your visibility and trustworthiness. The right picture can show potential clients that you are the experienced and dedicated lawyer that you portray on your website. Dress professionally, choose a neutral background, and be sure to smile. If you are part of a firm, take individual pictures as well as firm portraits.

## Client Reviews

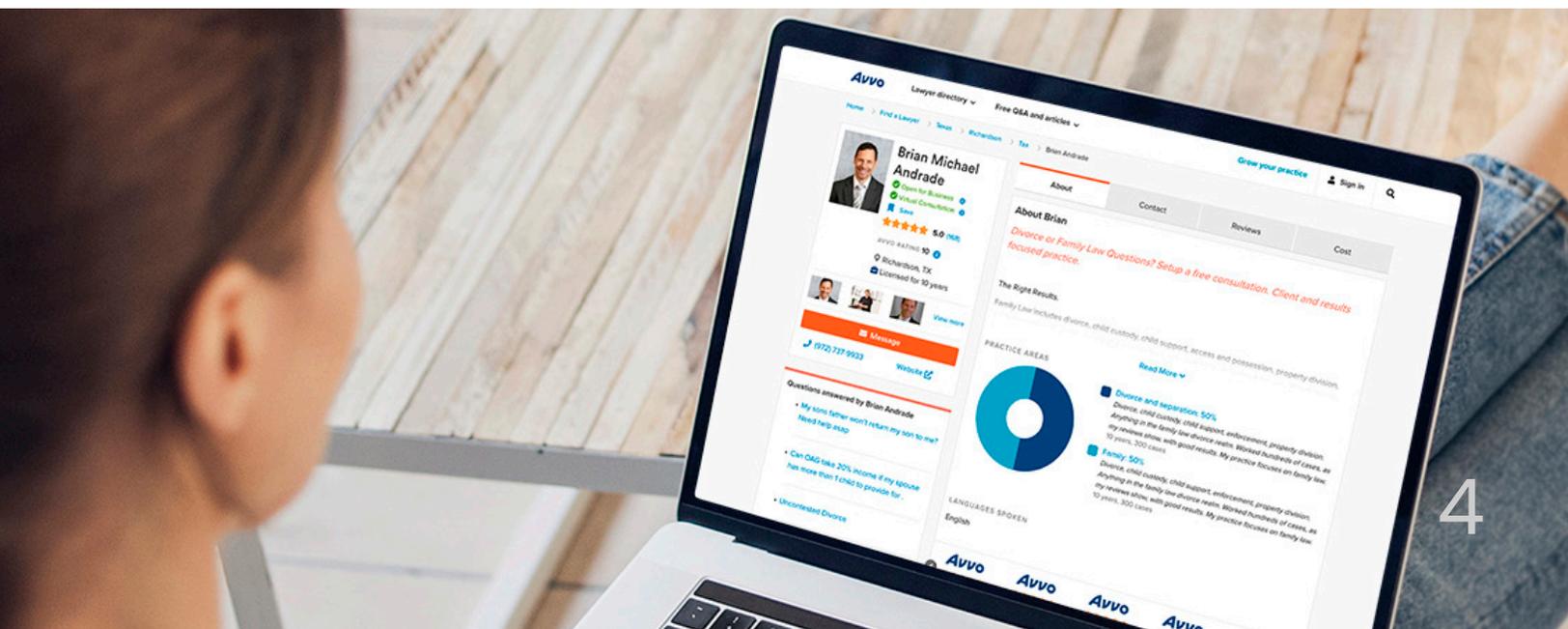
We will discuss client reviews in detail during Step 4. For now, just know that while client reviews may not affect your overall rating, they can affect whether or not someone hires you. We will discuss how to get your current and past clients to give good reviews and what to do if you receive a negative review later in this guide.

## Practice Areas

AVVO will base the number of years you have been licensed off of the date you passed the bar exam. If you feel that the “licensed for” time is inaccurate, be sure to contact AVVO. You are also able to change the “practice areas” information to reflect what you practice and the percentage of your time that is dedicated to that field. Remember, it is important to stay consistent. If one website says you do 100% personal injury but you list on AVVO that you do both personal injury and criminal defense, you may be sending a mixed message to your potential clients. That is why it is critical to list the same information throughout your web presence.

**Expert tip:** Hire a professional photographer to take your headshot. Get a number of pictures and ask family members, friends, and coworkers to tell you which capture the qualities you hope to sell, such as trustworthiness and experience.

**Remember,** AVVO will use your practice area information when placing you in search results, so be sure to fill out your practice areas in detail.



## **Attorney Endorsements**

This is a key area that we will discuss in depth later on in this guide. But for now, keep in mind that AVVO wants to promote people who are considered experts in their field and leaders in their practice area. Attorney endorsements have become increasingly more important in achieving a high rating. While the benefits do eventually taper off, it is still a good idea to continue to get endorsements from other attorneys.

## **Contact Information**

Filling out your AVVO profile to at least 95% completion wins you half the battle. But keep in mind that the contact information AVVO collects and displays before you claim your profile could be incorrect. Check this information, update it frequently, and provide accurate details. A client may contact you directly off of your AVVO profile, so make sure all of your information is displayed correctly, including your website, address, email, and phone number.

## **Resume**

The resume portion is broken down into a number of elements, with each element factoring into your overall rating.

### **License and work experience**

Be sure to be as detailed as possible when filling out this section, especially when it comes to your length of employment. Gaps in employment can affect your rating. Be sure that you include all licenses that you hold, including those not related to the legal field. And remember, the more information the better. Be sure to list any additional states that you are (\*or were) licensed to practice law. This can dramatically affect your overall rating.

### **Education**

Include information on any degree you have obtained. A client can easily get the information elsewhere on the internet, so don't be shy about including the dates you attended a specific law school or university. The more rich and diverse your background, the better chances you have of increasing your AVVO rating.

### **Awards**

Now we start to get to the fun stuff. The next several sections play a key role in determining your AVVO ranking. Like we discussed before, AVVO wants to promote those who are experts in their field, so you need to build a resume that shows you are an expert. This section should be filled with any recognition you have received from the legal industry as well as from outside the industry. Think outside the box when it comes to awards. Scholarships, law school jurisprudence awards, and all others matter. Be sure to include dates. AVVO is looking for the most recent awards and recognition but older ones count as well. If you need help deciding what awards you should list, you can always look at other attorney profiles.

## **Associations**

In this section, make sure you include any local and State Bar association memberships. Again, more recent memberships have a higher weight, but older association involvement is still relevant. AVVO also wants to see that you have held board positions or taken leadership roles. And be sure to add dates!

## **Publications**

Many attorneys take a lot of leeway when adding publications to their AVVO profile. Although AVVO might have been thinking more along the lines of legal journal or law review contributions and published legal articles or guides, many lawyers include posted blogs, marketing materials, opinion pieces, etc. But we feel the more the better. Put any published works and be sure to include dates.

## **Speaking Engagements**

List any speaking engagements you have done even if they were for an undergraduate class at the local community college. AVVO will increase your score if you can link to the event. The problem is that not all speaking engagements may be listed. One article suggests creating a press release or other information on your own website and linking to it. It may not be given as much weight but every little bit helps.

## **Portfolio**

Add information about your legal cases to your portfolio. Be sure to protect your client's information (many people use initials or first names only).



# The Pros and Cons of AVVO Advanced

Upgrading your free AVVO Profile to AVVO Advanced can be advantageous to your overall ranking because you are able to work with a consultant who can help you maximize your results. More importantly, AVVO Advanced will increase your visibility to potential clients. One thing that most attorneys notice right off the bat is that you may see your competitors' advertisements on your page. AVVO Advanced eliminates competitors from your page and gives you premier search results.

## Pros to AVVO Advanced

**Increased visibility** – more potential clients will see your contact information

**Added customization** for your profile such as highlighting positive client reviews

**Analytics** – see who is contacting you via AVVO Personalized headline

**Blog Linking**

\*\*\*Your profile will not include any competitors' ads\*\*\*

## Cons to AVVO Advanced

**Cost** starting at \$135.00 per month

**No exclusivity** – multiple attorneys are listed as "pro" for each practice area

**Return on Investment** – Are you getting clients from AVVO Advanced or would those clients have seen your free AVVO profile?

## AVVO Advertising

In addition to AVVO Advanced, you can pay \$225 per month for AVVO Elite, which offers attorneys a sponsored listing at the top of the search results or gives you a customizable display ad. At \$225 per month, AVVO Elite can be costly, so you need to consider how many people are using AVVO as a search option.

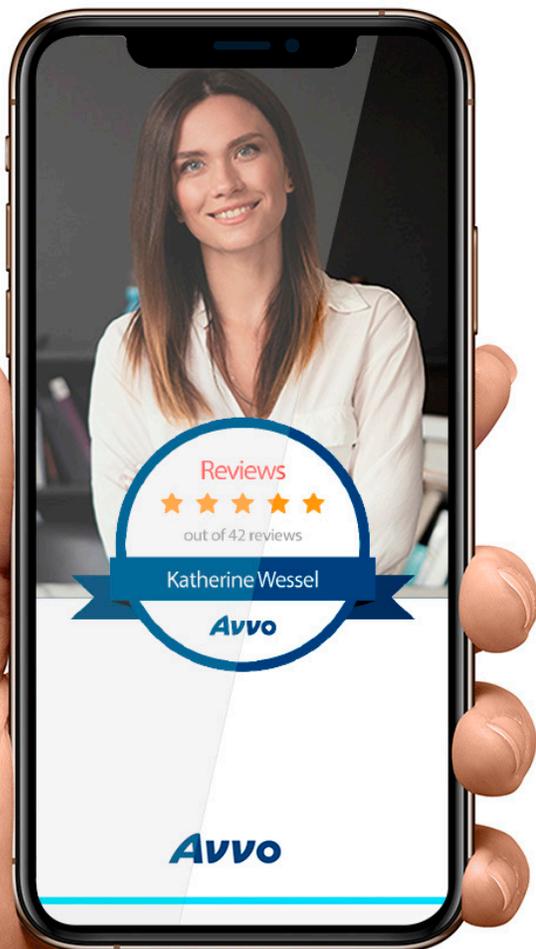
# Getting Client Reviews

There has been some debate as to whether getting client reviews is worth the work.

AVVO has repeatedly said that client reviews do not affect your ranking, but their visibility can affect a potential client's decision on whether to hire you or your firm.

We believe the best advice is to go ahead and gather positive client reviews. Think Yelp and Google Business Profiles. People are greatly influenced by reviews. Send satisfied clients a direct link so they can review you. Ask them to let you know if they feel they cannot give you a 5 star rating for any reason. Filling out the review is straightforward and easy for most clients to follow.

If you receive a negative review, you can contact AVVO. You can also try contacting the disgruntled client directly. Be sure to respond in a positive manner and try to resolve the issue.



# Contributing on AVVO

One of the more debated areas of AVVO is whether it is beneficial to become a contributor on AVVO.



Contributor levels are given based on how many questions an attorney answers, evaluating the comments given by others, and any legal guides that they have written. More weight is given to attorney answers that are “agreed with” by other attorneys. The contributor level on AVVO has no impact on your overall ranking but could help increase your visibility with potential clients.

Points are earned by answering questions with more weight given to those who answer a question the quickest. Guide-writing, guest-blogging and guest-hosting are heavily favored by AVVO and will help to increase your contributor

level to a “Top Contributor.” The system is not foolproof and can be cheated. Unfortunately (or fortunately for some), simply answering a question, such as “Do I need to hire an attorney?” will give you points. You can even answer questions in jurisdictions where you are not licensed to practice law.

# Peer Endorsements

---

Unlike adding client testimonials and increasing your contributor level, gaining peer endorsements can absolutely increase your AVVO rating.

Remember, filling out your profile to at least 95% completion wins you half the battle. The contact information that AVVO collects and displays for you before you even claim your profile could be incorrect. Check this information, update it frequently, and provide accurate details. A client may contact you directly off of your AVVO profile, so make sure the information, such as your address, website, email, and phone numbers are correct.



## Choosing the Right Options

With Peer Endorsements, it is crucial to choose the right options. Yes, any and all endorsements are a good thing, but some will be weighted heavier than others. AVVO will ask two questions: “How do you know this lawyer?” and “For which practice area are you endorsing this lawyer?” You can also opt to add a personal message, which will appeal to potential clients.

The most important question is “How do you know this lawyer?” Of all of the options, answering that you “Worked together on a matter” or that you were “Opposing counsel on a matter” will give the best chances for increasing your overall AVVO ranking. The other available options include: “Fellow lawyer in community, Worked for lawyer, Supervised lawyer, Co-worker, Friend, Family Member and Other.” As with most endorsements, those from friends and family may not be given as much weight as other options.



## Learning to Love AVVO

---

By now, you have probably developed pretty strong feelings toward AVVO – and you either love it or hate it.

As attorneys, we often struggle with the marketing side of our business. We became attorneys because we love to practice law, not to sell ourselves as lawyers. The problem is that we have to do just that, sell our firms and ourselves. Getting clients is how we stay in practice and are able to do what we love. So now is the time. Jump on the bandwagon!

### Learn to Love AVVO. Here's how

**Think of it as free advertising.** Once you get your rating up to par, AVVO can really work in your favor. Link to your AVVO profile on your page and get your badge to use as a marketing tool. (However, use caution when using their embedded link. See “Avoiding Disasters”)

**New attorneys can get high AVVO ratings.** On the other hand, many rankings and awards are reserved for seasoned professionals. This is because AVVO is based on a mathematical algorithm, not necessarily based on your background and experience. Accept the system for what it is. Leads, Leads, Leads. There is potential for new business from AVVO. People are becoming increasingly more familiar with the site and using it to find legal representation. So, if you need new clients, AVVO can help.



## Building your **Web Presence**

---

Internet marketing has grown into something that few people imagined. Today we are accustomed to quick searches on our phone or tablet. We Google nearly everything. Few saw what the web would become and how important internet marketing would be for all professions, including lawyers. Whether you are a solo practitioner or a multi-state firm, your web presence is important. Understanding how your online footprint works and utilizing all of the different platforms is a must. AVVO can fit right into your overall marketing plan and can help without costing an arm and a leg.

### Linking to your Websites and Blogs

**First things first, if you do not have a website and a blog – you need to consider getting both immediately.** Most attorneys grimace at the thought of blogging, but it is an important component of your web presence and can affect your search engine rankings. AVVO allows you to add a link to your website. Do it. Add links to your publications as well under the Article URL. If it is a print publication, add it to your website and link to that page. Add links to your Speaking Engagements. If there is no direct link, create a press release and link to it. You can also upgrade so that you can link to your blog. AVVO will allow a direct feed for Recent Posts. Again, take advantage of what AVVO has to offer.

**Pro tip:** Remember that keeping your brand consistent is important. Make sure that all the information on AVVO is relevant to the practice areas you promote on your website and social media platforms. Make sure you aren't giving clients mixed messages in what kind of law you practice.

# Avoiding Disasters

---

We get it. You do not want to take the time to set up your profile or waste the energy on some arbitrary rating system. But as we have hopefully shown you throughout this guide, claiming and completing your profile is a must.

**Reap the benefits of what AVVO has to offer, get the coveted 10.0 Superb rating, and get back to doing what you were born to do - practice law.**

In the meantime, make sure you understand the potential hurdles that await you and avoid them at all costs.

## Negative Reviews

AVVO enables clients to review you without your control. This can inevitably lead to a negative review from a disgruntled client. In addition, there are no measures in place to ensure that the reviewer is an actual client. Some have struggled to get a response from AVVO after requesting to have a negative or fraudulent review removed. That being said, if you do receive a negative review, still ask AVVO to remove it. AVVO does require reviewers to register prior to submitting a review and they read the review prior to posting to ensure that the post is valid. But people can still create a fake profile to register. Ask that the review be put through the dispute process.

If the dispute process fails, post a response to the review and request that the dissatisfied client contacts you directly. Apologize for any issue that occurred or that they feel occurred. Do not respond in anger. Potential clients



will be turned off by an aggressive or immature response. Stay positive in your comments. People want to see that you care. Take time preparing your reply and ask for advice from colleagues before posting it.

Most importantly, do not respond in a way that could result in discipline by the State Bar. If you disclose confidential information you will face punishment that will cause much more harm than one negative review.



## The Problem with the AVVO Badge

---

### A Cautionary Tale

The AVVO badge is shiny, particularly if you have received the top 10.0 Superb Rating. You want to show it off. You worked hard for that rating and want your potential clients to see your efforts. AVVO has thought of that and graciously offers the opportunity for you to claim your AVVO badge with an embedded link to put on your website and social media platforms.

The problem is that it may contain a link to your competitors. For a long time, people wondered how AVVO became one of the highest-ranking sites in search engine results for attorneys. Well one method they used to soar to the top is by embedding a link to an AVVO directory page into every badge attorneys add to their site.

**Solution?** Write all about how you are an AVVO All-Star, capture an image of your badge, and provide your own link directly to your profile.

Just be sure that you aren't giving a potential client a link to a directory of your competitors!



# Final Thoughts

---

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **Should I invest in AVVO Advanced?**

It depends. Is it worth \$135 per month to keep competitors off your page? If so, then yes, invest.

If you aren't sure, try it out for a month and if you are not getting a return on investment, cancel.

### **Do I need to become a contributor to AVVO to achieve a high ranking?**

No. Becoming a contributor by answering legal questions, agreeing with other attorneys, and providing legal guides will not increase your ranking. It will increase your contributor level which may look good to potential clients, but it might not necessarily be worth your time and energy.

### **What is the easiest way to increase my AVVO Ranking?**

Fill out your profile completely and get peer endorsements from attorneys you have worked with on a matter or have opposed. Also, make sure to list publications and speaking engagements with links, if available.

### **Can I "unclaim" my profile once claimed?**

One of the biggest complaints about AVVO is that an attorney cannot unclaim their profile once it has been claimed. You can request that an AVVO rating be removed, but you cannot delete your profile.

