

Tip of the Month

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LACBA

LOS ANGELES COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION

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Prime It: Your Duty to Expedite Litigation

Now that we have all caught our breath after the July sale – and every other retailer's version of Prime Day – consider your duty to expedite your legal services (while Amazon expedites your shipping).

Like Google, "Prime" has now achieved the enviable syntactic conversion to a verb, as in, "Can you Prime it?" Nowadays, if the shipping time for your online order is longer than two days, it might as well be a lifetime. Yet, attorneys must also expedite delivery of their services. Specifically, [Rule 3.2](#) of the ABA Model Rules requires lawyers to make reasonable efforts to expedite litigation consistent with the interests of the client.

The Comment to the Rule states that "[d]ilatory practices bring the administration of justice into disrepute." Such dilatory practices can also open the door to malpractice claims or grievances. However, by making reasonable efforts to expedite litigation, you can avoid potential malpractice hazards, such as failing to timely communicate with your client about the status of their case ([Rule 1.4](#)) or diligently working on their behalf ([Rule 1.3](#)).

We have all heard the old adage (and perhaps used it to pacify an impatient client) that "The wheels of justice turn slowly..." And while there are certainly factors out of our control that affect the overall timeline of a case, such as the court's docket or opposing counsel's schedule, we probably all have a case or two that doesn't get the attention it deserves. So, rather than scoff at the idea of "expediting" one more case on your already busy calendar, recall your duty to keep cases moving forward in a timely manner. After all, a happy customer (er, client) is a loyal one.