

MODULE 8E Advocate Advanced Topics  
SPECIAL SUBJECTS  
L3 Perils of the Non-profit

There is nothing inherently wrong with becoming a non-profit disability advocacy service. Unless of course the goal of your business is to make a profit! Non-profit organizations are fundamentally different from for-profit businesses in a number of important ways. For example, a non-profit is by law created as a means of supporting some type of socially beneficial cause within the community. These causes can range from providing free transportation to the handicapped to representing indigent clients before the Social Security administration.

Several years ago, Disability Associates offered a non-profit version of our training program. The program worked well and we received no complaints. However, we stopped offering a non-profit version of our course when after about a year, we began to receive disturbing feedback from our non-profit customers.

It turned out that because these agencies presented themselves to the public as a non-profit, the marketplace responded to them in a totally unexpected way. Instead of attracting normal workers (SSDI) claims, these firms were magnets for the indigent population.

In the minds of many disability applicants, the term non-profit means that the business or agency will work for free. Although this may or may not be true, it is still a widespread perception among many potential disability applicants.

Our non-profit students who hoped to make a profit in this field, find that most of those attracted to their service were completely indigent. Sure, you can expect a fair number of indigent clients to contact any disability firm, but in the case of a non-profit, the numbers were through the roof.

Since Disability Associates focuses on creating advocacy services that make money, it made no sense for us to continue offering a non-profit version of our program.

Please keep in mind that having a non-profit advocacy service can work in certain circumstances. For example: If you intend to focus your service on child cases or work with government agencies for the poor, a non-profit service may make sense.

Bottom-line! If you're starting an advocacy service for the purpose of making and sustaining a profit, do not allow yourself to be tempted by the attractions of the non-profit. It may in fact reduce your profit potential!