

Skill Gets You In. Alignment Keeps You There

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I recently had to fix two soft-close drawers that weren't closing completely. They needed a nudge from a hip or a hand to close the last ½-inch. Tightening the screws on the drawer rails was simple. The part that used to frustrate me was getting the drawers aligned so they'd slide back in smoothly. Then I learned a small trick that makes alignment easy.

It reminded me of legal nurse consulting.

The technical work - reviewing records, identifying deviations, building timelines - is the "tightening screws" part. Most nurses can do that well.

The consulting work is the alignment.

It's learning how to position your work so that it fits the attorney's strategy, deadlines, preferred level of detail, and specific angle they're building for the case. Once you understand how to align your work with what the attorney actually needs, closing the deal stops feeling intimidating. It becomes a repeatable process instead of a guessing game.

How do you make sure you're aligned?

You treat alignment as a process.

1. Clarify the attorney's goal - Some new LNCs skip this. Ask early:

- "What's the theory you're building?"
- "What questions are you trying to answer with these records?"
- What's the biggest unknown right now?"

This tells you what to emphasize, and what not to waste time on.

2. Confirm their preferred format - Attorneys vary.

- Some want a tight 2-page summary.
- Some want a 20-page chronology.
- Some want bullet points.
- Some want narrative.

Alignment means you don't guess; you ask.

3. Mirror their communication style

- If they write short, you write short.
- If they're formal, you're formal.

- If they're rapid-fire, you keep responses tight and timely.

This is the consulting version of “the drawer slides in smoothly.”

4. Deliver a small preview before the full product

This is the drawer trick in LNC form.

Send a short sample:

- “Here’s the first page of the chronology. Does this structure work for you?”
- “Here’s how I’m summarizing deviations. Do you want more or less detail?”

This shows you’re protecting the attorney’s time and tailoring your work.

Doing this for your first case with the attorney prevents misalignment before it happens.

The drawer doesn’t close because the screws are tight. It closes because the alignment is right. Same with LNC work: the skill gets you in the door, but the alignment keeps you there.

And for anyone wondering: The drawer trick was simple: I pulled the rails out as far as they would go. Then I set the drawer on the rails and pulled the catch pin on the underside of each rail forward until it clicked into place. Once you know how, alignment is easy.

I explore this idea further in *The Legal Nurse Consultant Procedure Manual (And More)*, in the section on sealing the deal with attorneys. <https://lnkd.in/egtbWgNS>

