

Pros and Cons of Online Templates and Examples

Corporate News: A Legal Update

By Emilie Rohde on February 6, 2024

In this day and age, we have a world of resources right at our fingertips, including new ways to access legal matters that would traditionally be handled by an attorney. For example, you can type "purchase agreement" or "lease" into the search bar and find hundreds of ready-to-use templates and examples in seconds.

Like with everything, there are benefits and drawbacks to the accessibility of standardized templates and sample agreements online. Consumers of legal services need to weigh risks against benefits, especially when looking at agreements that may have a substantial impact on their lives.

The Pros of Online Legal Templates

SAVINGS

Standardized templates examples found online are often less expensive than hiring an attorney to draft something more robust and tailored to your specific transaction or other needs.

EASILY ACCESSIBLE

Templates and examples are readily available online, so it's not difficult to find one. However, it can be difficult to find the *right one*.

QUICK AND SIMPLE

Most standardized templates available online are quick and easy to complete—you just fill in the blanks and sign. You can complete them without much thought, which serves as both a pro (for efficiency) but also a con (for accuracy and attention to detail).

The Cons of Online Legal Templates

UNKNOWN DRAFTERS

Finding out who wrote the agreement or template you are using, and their qualifications, can be difficult. Some documents are drafted by attorneys, while others may simply be a copy of something posted on a website or used by a business and its quality has not been assessed.

NOT ONE SIZE FITS ALL

Standardized templates rarely fit your situation exactly. To make it work, you will need to read it carefully, understand it, and identify what is applicable, what is not, and what is missing.

LEGAL JARGON CAN BE IMPORTANT

Contracts often have a section or two that are very long and complex, and they likely contain important provisions meant to protect you, so you must be sure you understand their purpose and effect. If you are not familiar with legal jargon and struggle to get through these sections, you need someone who can.

YOU MAY END UP SPENDING MORE

While online templates and examples may seem cost-effective, you may still need to hire an attorney to fix or redo the agreement, or to defend you against a lawsuit, if the template you used was not appropriate or did not protect your interests.

Whether to use online templates and examples comes down to a cost-benefit analysis of the pros and cons, but it is important to remember that attorneys are trained to protect your interests and to draft agreements that are tailored to your needs, which will likely offer more long-term protection.

If you would like a review of the standardized forms that your business currently uses, preparation of a new form that has been properly reviewed and can be regularly customized, or agreements for specific transactions to be drafted, we encourage you to contact a licensed and experienced attorney.

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