

# Inside the Courtroom: Chad Colton's Winning Strategies and Insights

Article By:

Stefanie M. Marrone

---

I recently had the opportunity to sit down with [Chad Colton](#), a seasoned litigator who helps Pacific Northwest companies and business owners navigate some of the most complex and high-profile commercial litigation cases. With a client roster that includes international brands, regional businesses and startups, Chad has successfully taken over 25 cases to trial across the country.

Early in his career, Chad sought to learn from the top trial lawyers in his region, gaining invaluable hands-on experience. Today, he shares his knowledge through his popular video series, "[When You Need to Win](#)," where he offers practical tips on trial work, depositions and oral arguments.

In our Q&A, Chad discusses the inspiration behind his video series, the most impactful tips he has shared and his goals for the future.

## **What inspired you to start the 'When You Need to Win' video series, and how did the initial idea come about?**

The idea was to do a modern take on "hitting the CLE circuit." I've always loved teaching and learning trial skills at CLEs and conferences, and with so few trials out there these days, it's really important for lawyers to share what they learn with each other and keep the craft alive. A business development coach of mine saw a video I did for my firm a few years ago and thought I appear well on camera. I think he said something super complimentary, like, "You're not a troll." So, we decided to blend the two concepts together—teaching trial and litigation skills in bite-sized videos that can reach a larger audience.

## **Can you share some of the most valuable tips you've discussed in the series that have been particularly impactful for trying cases before judges and juries?**

There are so many, but two really stick out to me. The first is to not overload your opening statement with detail. That's really hard to do for the type of commercial cases I deal with, but it's so important. Ultimately the details can make or break your case, but jurors just aren't going to grasp the nuances during opening. There's too much flying at them that early in the trial, and you can easily overwhelm your audience. The more impactful approach is to set a clear and powerful framework for the case in opening and then fill in the details during the case-in-chief.

---

The second is being careful with how you confront opposing witnesses at trial. The impulse for most lawyers is to try to shred every witness on cross-examination. That can backfire badly, especially if you don't have "juror permission" to attack. Jurors identify with witnesses and imagine what it would be like to sit in the witness box. They resent it when you go too hard on a witness. Also, not every opposing witness is a liar or even your enemy—they may just have a different take on things or are simply wrong. I often deal with this through an escalating approach on cross-examination, gradually building the intensity of my attack. I see how the witness's credibility and likeability hold up and adjust as I feel the jury turn on—or support—the witness.

**As the host of 'When You Need to Win,' what are some of the most important lessons you've learned from your experiences and how have these insights influenced your approach to trials?**

With the rarity of trials these days, it can be hard to retain the lessons you learn from one trial to the next. I've been really lucky to take a lot of cases to trial, but I still have to make a conscious effort to keep my skills sharp between trials. A huge part of the reason I like teaching trial techniques is that it keeps them loaded into my skillset. By teaching these things in the videos, and then discussing them with an engaged audience, it helps to solidify these concepts in my mind longer term so that I can use them in my approach to each trial.

**What has been the response from your audience and peers to the 'When You Need to Win' series, and can you share any memorable feedback or success stories?**

The response has been mostly positive, with some pretty comical negativity and passive aggression sprinkled in there. One of the coolest things has been the number of younger lawyers who reach out to say how much they appreciate the tips. It can be hard to find good instruction on trial and litigation practices, and the videos seem to help fill a void for some of them.

As for success stories, the videos have kept me top-of-mind for referral sources and they're a great excuse to stay in contact with people I like to work with. I've received referrals that I can trace directly to the videos, and I've also seen an unexpectedly large increase in the overall quantity of referrals since starting the videos. I wind up passing on a lot of the cases, but I always appreciate people thinking of me, and it gives me an opportunity to refer a case on to somebody else.

The negative feedback has been weirdly motivating. I knew going into this that there would be haters, especially in an audience of lawyers. I really steeled myself for that before releasing the videos, but it hasn't been as bad as I thought it would be. Mostly I get some sarcastic comments like, "Oh look it's the YouTube star," or people go out of their way to tell me they don't like some aspect of a particular video. I also get a surprising number of backhanded comments on how uninspired the video idea is—that any good lawyer could do something like this. Well, maybe, but they didn't do it. And the fact that people go out of their way to take a shot at the videos shows me they're working. I'm reaching the audience with my take and staying on their radar for good cases.

**Looking ahead, what are your goals for the 'When You Need to Win' series, and are there any exciting plans or upcoming episodes that you're particularly excited about?**

My main goals are to share the things I've learned and stay connected with great people in my market (the Pacific Northwest) who can send me interesting work. I'm also excited about expanding the in-house version of the series to include interviews with in-house lawyers at notable companies. Creating content for that crowd is the most challenging aspect of this project, and it will be great to

get some tips right from the lawyers who are on the inside.

Copyright © 2025, Stefanie M. Marrone. All Rights Reserved.

---

National Law Review, Volume XIV, Number 213

Source URL: <https://natlawreview.com/article/inside-courtroom-chad-coltons-winning-strategies-and-insights>