

OREGON LAW PRACTICE MANAGEMENT

My Experience with Square

A number of lawyers have asked me recently about using [Square](#) to process credit card transactions. Admittedly, the [ads are appealing](#). If you are an [iPhone](#), [iPad](#), or [Android](#) user and want simple, straightforward credit card processing, I understand the temptation. [Square](#) advertises:

- Fast set up
- A free credit card reader and free apps
- Next-day payout
- 2.75% merchant fee

If you occasionally accept credit cards for earned fees only and own an [iPhone](#), [iPad](#), or [Android](#), then [Square](#) may be a good choice for you. It is **not** a good choice if you:

- Want to accept credit cards for trust funds (Only [one account can be linked](#) at a time.)
- [Anticipate taking payments offline](#) (You must have an Internet connection to swipe.)
- [Don't have the app](#) (There is no way to process payments through the [Square](#) Web site in lieu of a mobile device.)
- Prefer [maximum flexibility in processing refunds](#). (Refunds are only available for transactions processed less than 60 days ago. Partial refunds are not allowed.)
- Expect to [process payments manually](#). (If you accept more than \$1,000 in card-not-present payments during any trailing seven day period, [Square](#) will defer depositing the amount in excess of \$1,000 for 30 days – but see the tips below.)

The lesson here is simple: always know the Terms of Service for any vendor with whom you do business. It only takes a few minutes to review the content at [Square's Help Center](#). I found it to be direct, to-the-point, and easy to navigate.

My Experience with Square

As a customer, I used [Square](#) for the first time recently. I really liked it! The store owner swiped my card, entered the amount and description, and I used my finger to sign on her [iPad](#). It was easy/breezy. (I chose to have the receipt e-mailed to me.)

Tips for Using Square

A couple of tips that I learned from this retailer and a lawyer I know who uses [Square](#):

- Customer support is friendly, helpful, and knowledgeable. Once you jump through the support hoops on their Web site, I'm told they are very easy to work with.
- Haggle! Terms with [Square](#) can be negotiated – just ask! One lawyer I know got [Square](#) to change his terms for processing payments manually – see above. I'm sure it didn't hurt that he had a track record with them.
- Using [Square](#) on the [iPad](#) is substantially easier than using it on the [iPhone](#) or [Android](#) (Clients will have a difficult time signing on the small screen of your smartphone.)
- Remind ladies with long fingernails to sign with the pads of their finger, not with their nails – the signature technology is heat-sensitive. Nails won't work and may scratch the surface of your [iPhone](#), [iPad](#), or [Android](#).

Other Alternatives for Lawyers Who Want to Take Credit Cards

[LawPay/Affinipay](#) is my favorite choice by far.

How does [LawPay](#) work?

- Lawyers using [LawPay](#) save up to 25% on credit card processing fees compared to typical bank charges for the same service.
- Fees are deducted exclusively from the operating account (no client money is ever taken).
- Funds are never commingled between the operating and trust account.
- You are in control of your deposits. If you take a credit card for a retainer, simply direct [LawPay](#) to deposit the funds in your trust account. If you accept a credit card for fees you have already earned, direct [LawPay](#) to deposit the proceeds into your operating account. Your ability to “direct traffic” ensures that funds are always properly separated.
- Transactions can be processed traditionally or via virtual terminal (i.e., over the Internet).

For a refresher about accepting credit cards (and the ethical constraints), [see this blog post](#).

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