

## Dancing on Direct: Direct Examination of Witnesses

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Preparing for the direct examination of a friendly witness is like choreographing a dance scene in a movie. Whether you are a new litigator or an experienced trial lawyer, you need a lot of planning and practice to be sure that the dancers make their way through an intricate series of steps while still seeming graceful and almost effortless.

Many jurors will have trouble understanding the underlying facts in a complex trial, but they will have no trouble reading the nonverbal signals. After all, they have seen enough movies and TV shows to know what lawyers and trials are supposed to look and sound like, and they won't hesitate to judge the honesty, confidence, and competence of the various players. So pay attention to sending the right nonverbal signals when preparing and presenting the direct examination of a friendly witness.

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