Learning Cross-examination Skills Vital for Legal Professionals

By Joe Tacopina

A former prosecutor, Joe Tacopina is an award-winning criminal defense attorney in New York City. Joe Tacopina contributed a chapter on examining a sympathetic witness to the book “Take the Witness: The Experts Speak on Cross Examination.”

In the United States, the sixth amendment to the [Constitution](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Constitution%E2%80%8E) gives criminal defendants the right to confront their accusers. In essence, this means defendants have the right to cross-examine witnesses to contest their testimony. For legal professionals, learning effective cross-examination techniques is a key courtroom skill to acquire.

One recommended book for law students and any legal professionals looking to boost their knowledge is “Take the Witness: The Experts Speak on Cross Examination.” Covering a wide range of topics, including strategies to deal with potentially challenging witnesses, such as eyewitnesses, experts, or police officers, the book features chapters written by experienced legal practitioners. Not only is the book beneficial to those learning trial dynamics, it also appeals to any person with interest in the field of law.

Experienced attorneys know how to assess witnesses to discern whether they can gain information to support their own case or discredit a witness’s credibility during cross examination. Law students can learn much by reading about the experiences and philosophies of recognized cross-examination experts.