



**THE FEEDBACK REPORT, 2018**  
WHAT YOUR CLIENTS SAY  
ABOUT THEIR LAW FIRMS



**PP&C CONSULTING**

*Trusted Advisors to the Legal Profession*



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# INTRODUCTION

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We've spent the last three years talking to hundreds of law firm clients. And we have good news and bad news to report. Most clients like and appreciate the work they get from their outside firms, but only a minority—less than a third—told us that they were “very satisfied” by their outside lawyers. We heard heartwarming praise—“They were in the foxhole with me”—and the familiar “too” complaints: too expensive, too inefficient, too slow to change.

The message for law firms is that there appears to be significant room for improvement for the majority of clients who are less than delighted with their current law firms. They seem to be suffering from low-grade fevers, annoyed now and then, but most stopping short of severing their ties.

There is much that can be done by firms to address the concerns that their clients are raising. Throughout our report, we suggest concrete action items that address their complaints. Overall, we think it fair to conclude that every firm consider two steps: First, begin or expand robust client feedback programs so that they understand what is on the minds of their clients; and second, redouble their efforts to align their behaviors and operations with their clients' expectations.

In our consulting practice, we speak frequently with in-house counsel in the largest and most successful global companies. Our work has taken us inside dozens of industries and to departments large and small. Our conversations with corporate counsel are confidential. Our research is for the eyes of our clients, typically law firm chairs, managing partners, and executive committees. In

our experience, clients like to be asked their opinions; they report that few of their law firms send emissaries to listen. In-house counsel have been candid in their remarks and judgments. They are looking to improve their relationships and, in our view, don't fire warning shots casually. They take their law firms and their work very seriously.

This report represents a summary of the 15 topics raised most frequently by in-house counsel. The comments generally fall into four categories, so we have grouped them accordingly: A) Relationships; B) Communication; C) Quality/Practice-related Issues; and D) Efficiency. Each of the topics starts with a client-feedback statement made by one or more of the best clients in the world. Some are biting; all are instructive. If you're a law firm lawyer, you may be wondering: Which ones apply to me? There is only one way to find out: You need to have someone ask your clients. You can inquire on your own, of course, and you should. But like most other humans, clients tend to be conflict-averse. If they have a nagging problem, they are simply more likely to tell a law firm leader or a trusted outsider.

We offer this report as both encouragement and a wake-up call. The remarks below explain what may be causing some of the widespread, albeit low-level, dissatisfaction reported in our survey. Please pay attention. For each, we suggest actions that a firm and its lawyers may take to improve their situation. Everyone knows how competitive the legal market is these days. When it comes to your clients, it's time to heed their wishes—and their warnings.





**“** ...hoarding by relationship partners appears to be a widespread and growing problem. **”**

# THE CLIENTS' BILL OF PARTICULARS: RELATIONSHIPS

## CLIENT FEEDBACK: OUR RELATIONSHIP PARTNER IS A PROBLEM

For the most part, we have found that clients like their law firm relationship partners. But over the past three years, dozens have expressed the same two concerns. First, in-house lawyers complain that the partner so dominates their relationship that they possess little or no knowledge of the rest of the firm's lawyers. And, second, the clients have no idea who would replace the partner if, as they almost always put it, "a bus hit him tomorrow."

We think of the first problem as *hoarding*, and the second as *a succession plan failure*. The two are related but not identical. Whether it is motivated by fear of losing compensation or credit, or fear that sharing client relationships will decrease internal leverage or limit the ability of a partner to threaten to pull his or her practice, hoarding by relationship partners appears to be a widespread and growing problem. Clients routinely notice it and comment on it.

Shifts in law firm age demographics and the reality that partners want to work longer than the traditional retirement age has created a ceiling, as it were, of senior partners who control client relationships in many law firms, and block clients' access to, or even knowledge of, the more junior members of client service teams. In our interviews, many in-house lawyers expressed real anxiety about the future. They desire advance planning to ensure continuity of institutional knowledge and sophisticated service. As one client said to us: "Why would a lawyer ever die without a will? Without a succession plan in place, that's what they're doing to me."

A related point: Many clients told us that they have no voice in the selection of the new relationship partner. They want to be consulted by the firm before a choice

is made. Some advance planning would have avoided the hard feelings we uncovered from clients who did not like the new partner assigned to their account. In several cases, they told us that if a change were not made by the leadership of the law firm, they would take their business elsewhere.

**Action Items:** Law firm managers need to actively police client relationships. Ideally, they will create a firm culture that institutionalizes client relationships, and rewards behaviors that ensure collaboration. That means seeing that senior relationship partners share information about clients, introduce everyone on the client service team to the clients, and encourage junior lawyers to form appropriate, independent relationships with their peers inside the corporate legal departments they serve.

Keeping client relationships healthy should be a key value at all law firms. But many firms lack the discipline to monitor and actively manage client relationships. From what we have found in our consulting work, it is clear that many firms need help changing their culture in this regard.

At a minimum, firms need a set of succession plans for their top 20 clients. They need answers to questions such as: Who will succeed the current relationship partner? What does the client think of this choice? Are we ensuring that the voice of the client is heard? If a likely successor has not been groomed, who will take charge of preparing the next relationship partner? And how will the firm monitor the progress?

# RELATIONSHIPS

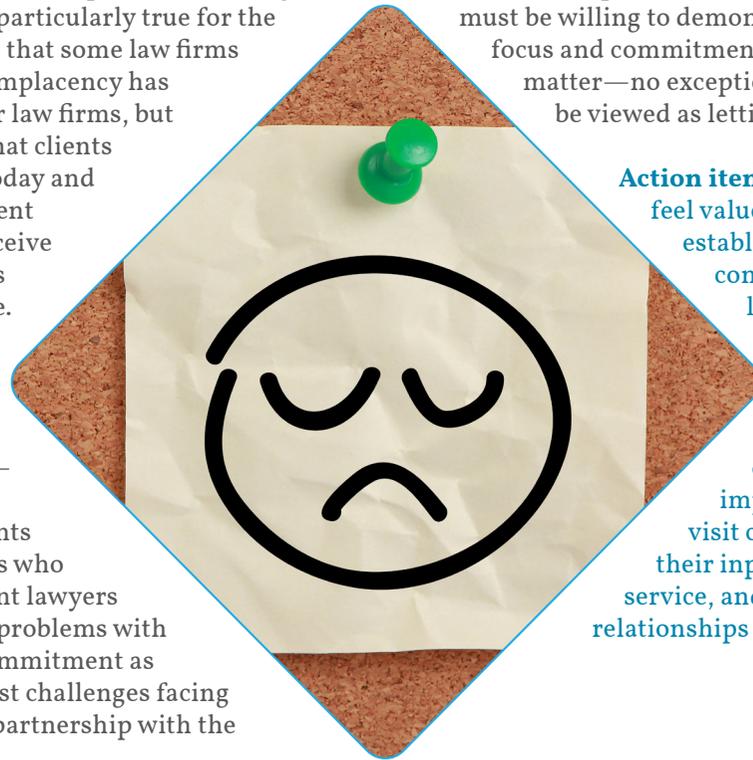
## CLIENT FEEDBACK: OUR LAWYERS TAKE US FOR GRANTED

Increasingly, we hear clients complain about being taken for granted. This is particularly true for the large, institutional clients that some law firms are privileged to have. Complacency has always been a problem for law firms, but our survey results show that clients are far more aware of it today and far more willing to comment negatively when they perceive that they are not valued as highly as they expect to be.

In-house lawyers do not want to be ignored. If they suggest a tactic, they expect to be heeded—or at least that this will prompt a discussion. Clients want to work with lawyers who listen to them. Clients want lawyers who approach their legal problems with the same intensity and commitment as they do. One of the greatest challenges facing law firms is to infuse the partnership with the

need for a compact of shared intensity. Partners must be willing to demonstrate the same level of focus and commitment for every client on every matter—no exceptions. Anything less should be viewed as letting the partnership down.

**Action items:** Clients need to feel valued. That often means establishing and expecting concierge-service at every level of the firm, and in every aspect of firm service. Having and enforcing high levels of service standards can help. Equally important is the need to visit clients regularly, seek their input and feedback on service, and ensure that personal relationships are kept robust.



# RELATIONSHIPS

## CLIENT FEEDBACK:

OUR PRINCIPAL LAW FIRM IS MORE WORRIED ABOUT ITS PROBLEMS THAN MINE



Everyone in this market knows that many law firms are watching their profit margins and market shares slip. As a result, law firm managers have pressured partners to focus on the economics and expansion of their practices. Clients have noticed too, and they worry that some of their outside lawyers have put their economic interests ahead of the interests of the clients. This is the wrong time to leave that impression, because many in-house counsel feel serious pressures also: imperatives to reduce their legal spending, find less expensive providers, win deeper discounts, or, when all else fails, do the work themselves.

Clients complain that the emphasis on getting more work or rate increases dominates conversations with their relationship partner, and leaves the distinct impression that the main focus of the law firm is its own economic interest. There is no bigger turnoff for in-house counsel.

**Action items:** Clients notice when their lawyers' interests are not aligned with their interests. Clients understand that their lawyers are running a business too, but they want to spend their time focused on their own problems, not yours. Clients value lawyers who put the client's interests and needs ahead of their firm's own economic advantage. Things like working to increase efficiencies, developing meaningful budgets, seeking early matter resolution, and pushing work down to less expensive colleagues may mean fewer billable hours and lower profits, but that may translate into a happier client with closer ties to the firm.

# RELATIONSHIPS

CLIENT FEEDBACK:  
WE HIRE TOO MANY  
LAWYERS WITH  
"SHARP ELBOWS" WHO  
CAN'T OR WON'T WORK  
WELL WITH OTHERS

Clients appreciate and like working with lawyers who are collaborative and can work well with others. Frequently, complex corporate problem-solving involves many disciplines and requires lawyers to work with lawyers from other firms, or with consultants from other professional service providers. In these situations, nothing attracts more negative commentary than lawyers with sharp elbows: those who can't work with or refuse to cooperate with others. Clients take a very dim view of too much ego or self-interested (read greedy) behaviors on a team that should be working together seamlessly to solve their problems.

Clients tout the benefits of virtual law firms that involve lawyers effectively working across borders, firms, or disciplines to get the job done. They quickly notice lawyers who sabotage their efforts to create functioning interdisciplinary teams, or who impede their effectiveness. This is a real problem, but it may be diminishing. Why? As one general counsel put it: "Now

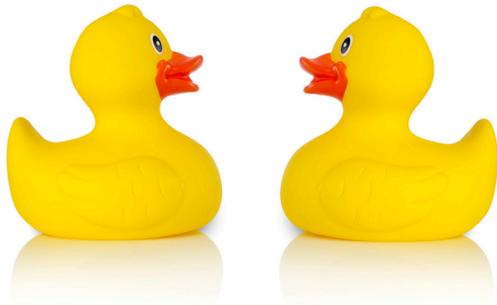
this is a situation I can resolve. If they won't play nicely in the sandbox, I get rid of them. And I don't hire them again. Problem solved."

**Action items:** Good client service models include a strong emphasis on collaboration. Recent research proves that firms that foster collaboration and make it part of the firm's DNA increase their client satisfaction and long-term economic success. Focusing on the value and importance of collaboration should be a primary focus of top management in every law firm. Devising compensation systems to recognize and reward collaboration is a start. Setting examples, celebrating success, and making collaboration a topic of conversation and a focus of attention will help a firm develop and maintain a collaborative culture. We found that clients will recognize and reward lawyers and firms that can work effectively with others.

# THE CLIENTS' BILL OF PARTICULARS: COMMUNICATION

## CLIENT FEEDBACK:

WE LIKE EMAIL AND  
TEXTS, TOO, BUT THEY  
ARE NOT A SUBSTITUTE  
FOR PERSONAL  
COMMUNICATION.  
SOMETIMES I WANT TO  
SEE YOUR FACE



Effective use of technology has undoubtedly increased the efficiency of client service. Access to email, the electronic transmission of documents for review, and the use of videoconferences contribute to the sense of immediacy and urgency that reflect a real focus on solving clients' legal problems in real time. Those are good and irreversible developments.

But they are not the same as visiting. Increasingly, clients complain about a lack of face time. In-house counsel tell stories of their lawyers coming to their corporate headquarters and not taking the time to stop by and visit with all the people they serve. As one in-house counsel advised, don't let "the human connection" wither and die.

Clients don't want to waste their time on random or idle visits. But repeatedly they said they wanted to hear more from the lawyers they like and who take the time to prepare for a meeting. They weren't looking for a new friend—"I don't need you to take me to lunch to check in on my grandchildren," said one exasperated general counsel. "I don't mind showing pictures, but this is a business meeting. Talk to me about my business!"

Lawyers who avoid routine in-person visits do so at their peril. Other firms are quick to fill the void. When we visited with a client headquartered on the East Coast of the United States, the general counsel spoke warmly of the annual visits she received from a California firm

whose lawyers "walked the halls of my department, talking with our lawyers."

We asked, what were the results of those visits?

"Sometimes they left with new business. They always left knowing more about what we were doing and planning."

The relationship partner of the law firm that had sent us was headquartered only a few minutes away. We asked, how often do you see him?

"Almost never. If we call, he's very responsive, but if we don't . . ."

**Action items:** Law firm managers who fail to oversee and police client relationships are making a serious mistake. Allowing the relationship partner free rein with no supervision can be disastrous. Managing partners and practice group leaders need to ask their partners when they last saw their clients. *Not wrote an email, but saw them.* And then insist that they make at least an annual visit.

Seeking routine client feedback will ensure that management understands where the firm sits with the client. And, as important, allow management a say in strengthening the firm's relationship.



# COMMUNICATION

## CLIENT FEEDBACK:

ASK ME HOW  
YOU'RE DOING

Clients like and sometimes expect after-action reviews. But they remain relatively rare events between law firms and their clients.

A joint review can be a learning experience and an opportunity to solidify a relationship. Many if not most clients work in environments where they are expected to build on their experience. An after-matter session allows a law firm to demonstrate that it too behaves in a businesslike manner. Of course, the firm needs to heed the lessons or risk disappointing the client.

One thing to avoid: a short, impersonal web survey. "I didn't buy a stove or take a flight," one annoyed general counsel told us. "I spent six figures to go into the capital market. If you want to know what I thought of your work, ask me. Don't send me a Survey Monkey."

**Action items:** A frequent generator of positive commentary is the partner who volunteers after a deal or litigation is closed to provide a postmortem. An analysis of the events that led up to the litigation or the factors that complicated a deal can lead to new business practices designed to avoid the next case, or make the next deal go more quickly and successfully. This is definitely an area where the lawyers' assistance is recognized as truly client-focused, and not self-centered. In term of best practices that ensure client loyalty, this is close to the top of the list. This is also something that may be a true differentiator, as even some top law firms do not make this a routine practice.

# COMMUNICATION

## CLIENT FEEDBACK: OUR OUTSIDE FIRMS ARE NOT SUFFICIENTLY DIVERSE

Corporations are recognizing not only the imperative of diversity in their global operations, but the real value that diversity adds to their decision making and operations. As companies become more diverse, they are more acutely aware and more vocal about the lack of diversity at their law firms. Clients tell us that they read the results of law firm diversity surveys and are left wondering why the teams assembled to work on *their* matters aren't diverse at all. In our experience, more companies are requiring a stronger, more result-oriented commitment by their law firms to provide diverse teams.

**Action items:** Ask clients about their views and goals on diversity, which in practice will vary, and then seek to meet them. Firms need to set quantifiable goals and regularly monitor their progress. They may come up short, but without clearly stated targets, it is extremely unlikely that firms will deliver more diverse teams to clients who want them. We find frequently that firms have a communications gap, as they often are not successful in communicating their diversity successes to their clients. Honest dialogue around the diversity issue between law firms and their clients is critical.

This is also an area in which firms may collaborate with their clients. Law firms sponsor a variety of secondment, training, and mentoring programs for their associates. Companies committed to diversity will partner with outside firms if these efforts have a diversity component.



# COMMUNICATION

## CLIENT FEEDBACK:

I HAVE A DAY JOB, AND  
THAT DOESN'T INCLUDE  
KEEPING UP WITH ALL  
THE PLACES WHERE YOU  
HAVE OFFICES



Firms with more than one office—across the nation or the world—want their clients to use all of them. More often than not, clients don't follow their firms around the world. They cite several reasons:

- They don't trust the uniformity of quality. They say they want the ablest lawyers. "Just because we love your work in Chicago, that doesn't mean we want to use your new office in Almaty," one investment house lawyer memorably told us. "I need the best lawyer I can find in Almaty. Why would I think he works for you?"
- They don't know where the firm has offices. Two examples: First, we met with a large U.S. corporate client that had recently completed its first acquisition in Asia. The general counsel was very pleased with the deal and the legal work, which, as it happened, had been handled by another firm. Why had she chosen that firm? "Because they have offices all over Asia." We asked if she knew that the firm we represented also had offices in Asia. "No," she said. "If someone ever told me that, I'd long since forgotten." Second, on behalf of another global firm, we met with a U.S. energy company that had, among other initiatives, expanded recently into Latin America. Over the course of our interview, the executive mentioned a series of problems that had arisen in South America. In passing, we asked if they had spoken with our firm's lawyers who were based there. He smiled and said, "You have offices there? Do you think you could introduce me to someone?"

**Action items:** Even effective relationship partners stumble when they try to keep clients informed about all the things that their law firms could do to help. It's hard to imagine many clients reading—let alone remembering—the announcement of a new office in Boulder, Santiago, or Timbuktu.

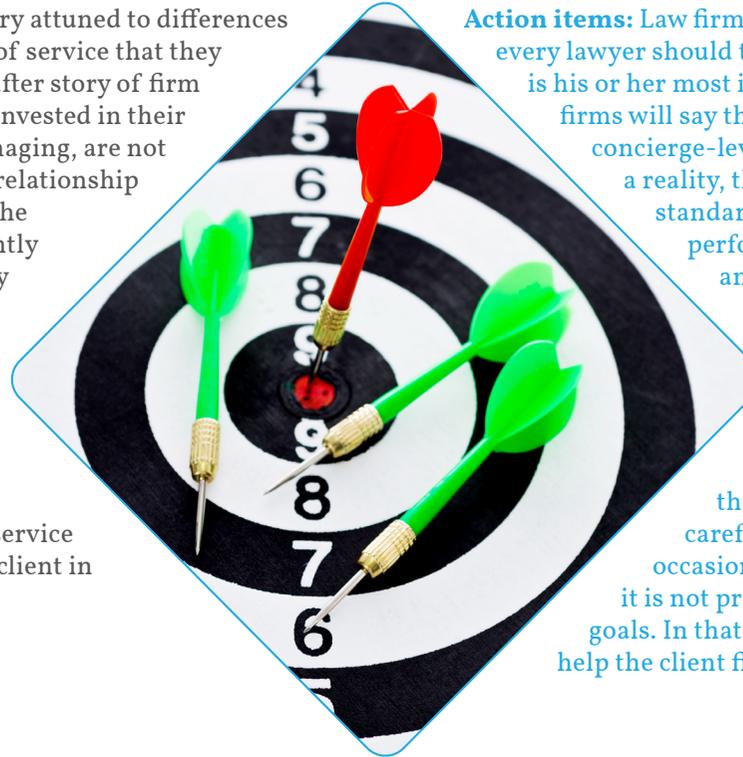
These are situations in which law firms need to adopt a just-in-time approach. The first client cited above had no need for lawyers in Asia—until she did. This puts the burden squarely on the law firm to stay informed about their clients' plans and then to offer to help as appropriate. Sometimes that means finding the best lawyer available, even if it's one who works at a different firm. Several times clients referred to situations where partners made referrals to lawyers at other firms. Clients noticed and remembered the lawyers who put the needs of the client ahead of a few more origination credits. Invariably, this behavior led to more business.

Relationship partners also must be trained and rewarded for recognizing opportunities with clients outside their own practice silo. The true trusted advisor is vigilant and has her or his ear to the rail every day to ascertain where the next area of need is arising.

# THE CLIENTS' BILL OF PARTICULARS: QUALITY/PRACTICE RELATED ISSUES

CLIENT FEEDBACK:  
MY OUTSIDE  
LAW FIRM DELIVERS  
INCONSISTENT SERVICE

In-house lawyers are very attuned to differences in the level and quality of service that they receive. They tell story after story of firm lawyers who are not as invested in their work or, even more damaging, are not as accomplished as the relationship partner. Clients notice the differences, and frequently they don't like what they see. Sometimes this problem develops after a firm has expanded its relationship and won a new engagement, and then fails to deliver the high-quality work and service that had impressed the client in the first place.



**Action items:** Law firms need to emphasize that every lawyer should treat every client as if it is his or her most important client. Most firms will say that they want to provide concierge-level service. To make that a reality, they need to establish standards and reward good performance. (Also, retrain and, if necessary, discipline lawyers who fail to meet the firm's standards.) Firms that tend to excel at service tend to spend time at the outset understanding what their clients want, and then carefully set expectations. On occasion a firm may discover that it is not prepared to meet those client goals. In that situation, the firm needs to help the client find new counsel.

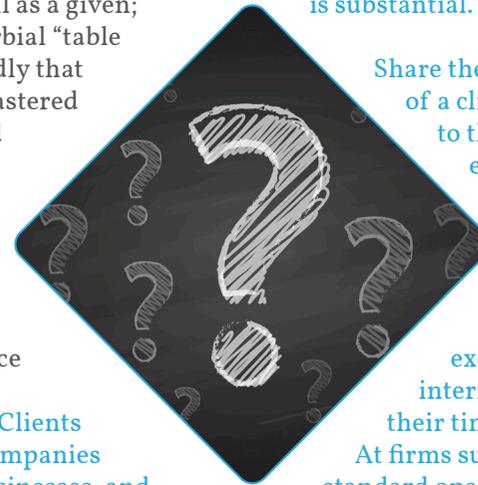
# QUALITY/PRACTICE RELATED ISSUES

## CLIENT FEEDBACK:

OUR OUTSIDE LAWYERS  
DON'T UNDERSTAND  
OUR BUSINESS,  
OUR CULTURE,  
OUR PROCESSES,  
OR MY ROLE

Clients seldom hire incompetent lawyers. But they tell us that too often they hire oblivious ones. Almost to a person, they take technical skill as a given; top-quality lawyering is the proverbial “table stakes.” But they complain repeatedly that too often their lawyers have not mastered their business, industry sector, and company culture. Worse, in-house lawyers report that sometimes law firm partners do not appreciate the nature of their role within the company and the decision-making processes in the environments in which they practice

**Action items:** Learn the business. Clients value lawyers who dig into their companies and learn about their structure, businesses, and products, and who exhibit in-depth knowledge of the legal challenges facing their particular industry



sectors. This is a significant investment by lawyers and firm professional staff, but the potential return is substantial.

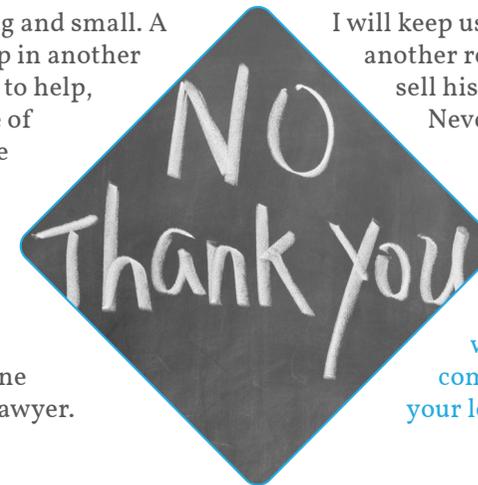
Share the knowledge. Sophisticated knowledge of a client’s operations should not be limited to the relationship partner, but must be exhibited across the client service team.

Map the client. Firms can follow the lead of other first-class professional services organizations and engage in “client journey mapping.” These exercises require firms to chart the internal decision making of their clients, their timelines, and their reward structures. At firms such as McKinsey and Deloitte, this is standard operating procedure. Many law firms are now beginning to follow their example.

## CLIENT FEEDBACK:

PLEASE DON'T REFER  
ME TO A PARTNER  
THAT YOU DON'T KNOW

We heard about this from clients big and small. A client calls a partner asking for help in another practice area or another city. Eager to help, the lawyer responds with the name of another partner whom he may have met but whose work he doesn't really know. The client calls and, depending on the story, is a) ignored; b) blown off; or c) poorly served. Making matters worse, the referring partner too often fails to follow up on the introduction. As one aggrieved client told us: “I like my lawyer.



I will keep using him. But I will never ask him for another referral. He wonders why he can't cross-sell his firm to me? Well, I tried that once. Never again.”

**Action items:** Impose a simple internal standard that requires due diligence before any referral is made, and follow-up calls every 30 days after. Clients are too hard to win and too easy to lose to trust them to complete strangers who happen to share your letterhead.

# QUALITY/PRACTICE RELATED ISSUES

## CLIENT FEEDBACK:

MY FIRM GIVES ME TOO  
MUCH "LEGAL WORK"  
AND NOT ENOUGH  
PRACTICAL ADVICE

Perhaps it is better to introduce this point on a more positive note by sharing the frequently expressed praise of lawyers and firms that provide what clients refer to as "pragmatic" legal advice. Generally, corporate clients have business problems to solve brought about in the context of litigation or regulatory or transactional actions. Long gone are the days when in-house counsel would welcome or even tolerate the 30-to-50-page in-depth legal analysis of every aspect of the legal issues involved in their controversies. Clients want and are willing to pay for expert, practical advice that cuts to the core of the issues, with an appropriate appreciation of the business and industry implications of the decisions that must be made to solve the problems. Lawyers who are not viewed as "strategic thinkers" are ignored or abandoned. In-house lawyers expect the kind of pragmatic, problem-solving legal advice from their outside legal providers that their business executives demand from them.

**Action items:** Obviously, law firms want to offer their clients lawyers with deep legal, industry sector and business expertise that allows her or him to provide the kind of pragmatic advice that clients really value. That being said, we found clients increasingly suspicious of firms that provide lengthy legal analysis of the law without the kind of practical, business-oriented advice that the in-house counsel knows will satisfy their business audience. Training associates and junior partners to recognize and provide practical legal advice should be the goal of every professional development program in today's law firm environment. Allowing junior lawyers to accompany senior lawyers to meetings and conference calls, without double-billing the client, is another way to instill the importance of practical legal advice and provide lessons in developing the expertise to be able to give it.



# THE CLIENTS' BILL OF PARTICULARS: EFFICIENCY

CLIENT FEEDBACK:  
WE ARE A WELL-  
MANAGED COMPANY,  
BUT MY LAW FIRM IS  
POORLY MANAGED,  
THAT MAKES US  
UNCOMFORTABLE

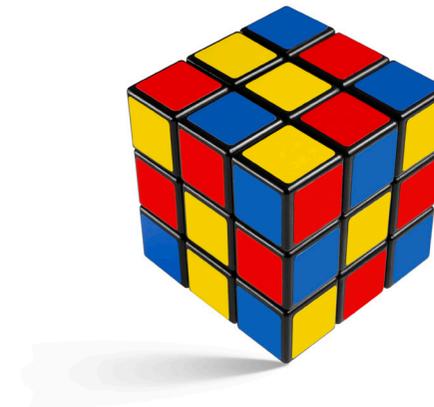
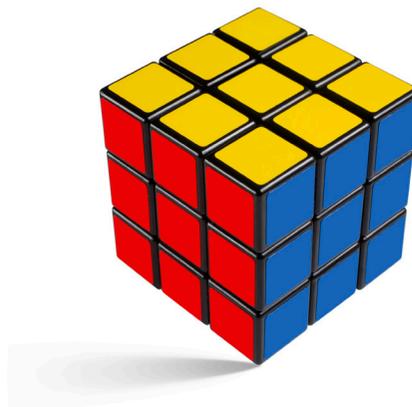
Effective matter management now counts more than ever for clients. In-house counsel face increasing pressure within their companies to operate with a high degree of efficiency. They appreciate the value of strong and effective management within the environments in which they operate. What that translates to for law firms is increased client scrutiny on the matter management front. In-house counsel expect that their law firms should be as well-managed as their own companies are.

In addition to the age-old complaints about issues such as overstaffing, opaque bills and other bad billing practices, too much partner or associate time, revolving and undedicated associate assignments, etc., our surveys indicate that clients are increasingly quick to note a lack of internal communication within their law firms. They notice and comment negatively on things like lack of coordination and failure to share knowledge across the teams of lawyers that provide their legal services. "I remember when the law firm's team showed

up to start working [on our matter]," one general counsel recalled ruefully. "It was clear to me that they had never met each other before or even talked to each other before. We didn't appreciate that."

**Action items:** Building a world-class service team is the obvious answer. But while you're waiting for that great day to arrive, start by asking your clients what you can do better, or what you're doing that's not up to their standards. Then fix the problems they have identified.

Like every other service business, law firms are sometimes unappreciated by their customers. They achieve great things for their clients, only to discover that the clients remember and remark on the single perceived overbilling, broken promise, conflict issue, or poor service incident when evaluating their law firms. We feel your pain. Now, let's get back to work.



# EFFICIENCY

## CLIENT FEEDBACK:

OUR OUTSIDE FIRMS  
HAVE SOME GREAT  
LAWYERS, BUT THEY ARE  
STRETCHED SO THIN THAT  
WE DON'T GET MUCH HELP  
FROM THEM

## CLIENT FEEDBACK:

MY OUTSIDE FIRM RAISES  
ITS RATES BUT DOES NOT  
UP ITS GAME

Many in-house counsel feel frustrated when they discover that the lawyers they trust are overcommitted and thus unavailable. Pressures of billing hours and servicing many clients often make the most successful, sought-after lawyers inaccessible to clients when needed. Often, lawyers and their support staff inadvertently reinforce this impression by referring to the myriad demands on the lawyers' time, and the conflicts presented by travel demands, depositions, court appearances, meetings, etc. Clients frequently express concerns about their key lawyers being overstretched. In those situations, clients may not give new work to lawyers that they like because of concerns that they cannot devote the time to a new matter that is necessary.



It seems axiomatic that asking customers to pay more for the same service should be supported by a commitment to give more in exchange. Gone are the halcyon days when law firms could increase rates for no more apparent reason than the passage of another year. Clients are increasingly expressing a novel sentiment in their comments on proposed law firm rate increases: "What improvements to service or efficiencies are you making that justifies the increased rates?"

**Action items:** At a minimum, law firm managers should anticipate and head off this reaction by packaging any request for a rate increase with a pledge to provide *more*: more efficiency, more sophisticated technology, more transparency in bills, or more

**Action items:** The easy answer is to introduce clients to a broad array of firm talent, especially the lawyers who support the senior talent. This is good for internal morale; it will also develop a sense of confidence that the firm has a deep bench of fully qualified lawyers to handle efficiently the most sweeping and complex matters.

A subtler point is to avoid giving the message that the lawyer is just too busy to pay attention to a client. We understand that if you're good, you're going to be busy. Clients get that. But if they want a call returned or a meeting scheduled, it's just a mistake to respond with a long litany of other commitments or travel schedule conflicts. They want to know when they will hear from you. Answer them. Save the woe-is-me for your dog. He will listen.

responsiveness to justify the request. Or, even better than a pledge, a demonstration of how the firm has improved its service or learned something from the last engagement. In other words: proof that you're worth more this year than last.

In truth, maybe you're not. Perhaps you're just trying to keep up with your costs. Clients understand the pressures; they're in business too. The annual account review gives you a chance to talk about what the client values and how you're delivering what they need. Most don't want you to suffer. But they don't want to be played for fools.



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