

THE STATE OF

Legal Client Experience

IN 2026

The Legal CX Report® is a study of 430+ practicing attorneys, law firm executives, and legal clients that reveals Legal Services' Change Paradox, and what separates firms that survive from those that thrive



Legal Client Experience Report

published by  case status

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

For Case Status's second annual Legal CX Report®, we partnered with Researchscape, an independent market research firm, to survey 430+ practicing attorneys, law firm executives, and legal clients in the United States. All data was collected in February 2026.

Last year's report found that the average firm is falling short of client expectations, not because attorneys don't care, but because they're relying on outdated tools to fight modern battles. That insight resonated across the industry.

This year, we wanted to push further. We set out to test a bold hypothesis: Today's legal clients care more about how their firm treats them than the legal outcome the firm achieves for them. The data revealed a more nuanced story, one that will unsettle every firm that's ever sacrificed client service for win rate.

Clients evaluate law firms holistically, weighing legal outcomes and client service together when deciding whether to return for future legal needs.

This finding is overwhelmingly positive news. How you treat your clients is fully within your firm's control, unlike legal outcomes. Delivering a world-class client experience is a competitive moat that sets you apart from other firms, including bigger firms with deeper pockets.

But here's the rub: Even though most firms provide good enough client service and somewhat satisfy their clients, that satisfaction isn't translating predictably into recommendations and reviews.

While 3 in 4 clients are completely or very satisfied, only 41% would recommend their legal team, and just 29% would leave a positive review.

If your clients are satisfied but silent, your firm is invisible when it matters most: *when people are looking to hire a law firm*. We found that most modern buying decisions are influenced by recommendations and reviews. This means driving client advocacy needs to be a top priority.

As you'll see, **there's a direct line between how a firm operates and how its clients show up publicly to speak about their experience**. But while 93% of attorneys say their firm is willing to change how it operates to better serve clients, most are still doing things "the way it's always been done" and producing clients who are satisfied but silent.

5 KEY FINDINGS

01

Clients judge law firms on both legal outcomes and their experience.

Firms that prioritize win rate over client service are playing a losing game.

02

74% of clients reported being satisfied with their legal outcome, but only 41% would recommend their legal team.

Satisfaction is a false signal. It reflects whether the job got done, not how someone felt.

03

When shopping for a firm, most clients rely on recommendations, reviews, and referrals. Just 5% of clients say traditional ads influence them most.

Some firms are investing in the wrong marketing channels.

04

Operational investments in proactive communication and responsiveness drive higher Google review ratings.

Platform data proves the CX-to-growth connection.

05

Attorneys say they're willing to change how they operate to better serve clients, but firms haven't built systems around client experience.

Legal Services still relies on communication channels from a different era.

Today, the Legal Services industry is split into two distinct camps:

One clings to approaches that worked in a different era and views change as unnecessary risk. The other acknowledges that the market has shifted and embraces change because they understand that standing still in a moving market is actually the riskiest strategy of all. We call these firms *Fossil Firms* and *Future Firms*.

Fossil Firms are writing their own extinction stories while Future Firms are future-proofing their practices.

FOSSIL FIRM

/ fos-uhl furm / noun

Anchored to tradition. Embraces the familiarity of precedent. Aware that change is needed but resistant to real change. Treats client management as a burden separate from legal practice. Views client inquiries as interruptions. Trapped in a cycle of reactive communication: working on cases for weeks without contact, then fielding calls from anxious clients wondering if anything is happening. Believes that technical legal skill alone is enough. Assumes that because they've been around for 30 years, they'll be around for 30 more.

FUTURE FIRM

/ fyoo-cher furm / noun

Honors legal foundations, but feels the pull of change. Genuinely wants to serve clients better, even if it means changing how they operate. Doesn't just intend to change, but actually changes. Understands that client experience is not a burden; it is an integral part of legal practice. Moves fast, listens well, invests wisely. Harnesses technology not just to make their own work easier, but to make their clients' experience better. Knows that standing still in a moving market is the riskiest strategy of all.

Which type of firm will you be?
The choice is yours to make.

CHAPTER 1

The Outcome Illusion

Clients don't separate the legal work from the experience of being a client. They evaluate both together. Firms that bet everything on legal performance are only solving half the equation.



Key Finding:

Clients judge law firms on both legal outcomes and their experience.

**The data in this section
exposes the Outcome Illusion:
Legal results matter, but they're
not the most reliable driver of
client sentiment.**

Clients who prioritize legal outcomes are the least satisfied with the very outcomes they emphasize, while clients who prioritize how they're treated report higher satisfaction with their experience *and* greater loyalty.

This is, in part, because outcomes are less controllable and therefore a less reliable basis for how clients ultimately feel as they reflect on their legal journey. Even the most skilled attorneys can be constrained by facts, timing, and circumstance; factors no firm can fully control.

Client experience is different. It's the controllable half of the equation, and clients reward it. When firms communicate proactively, minimize uncertainty, and support clients emotionally, satisfaction rises, and loyalty follows.

**Building systems around client
experience is the most
dependable way to shape how
clients feel about your firm.**

Clients don't judge firms on legal outcomes alone or client experience alone. They judge them on both.

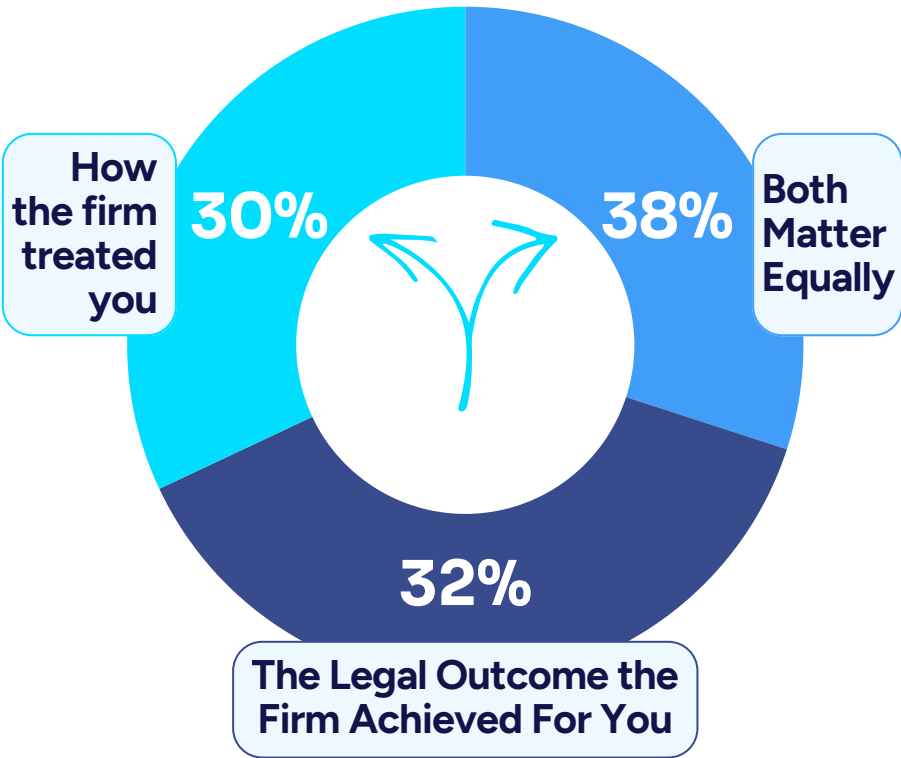
For decades, law firms have operated under a familiar assumption: clients judge them on results. Win the case, secure the settlement, and clients will be satisfied. This is the heart of the Outcome Illusion: the false belief that a strong legal result alone drives high client satisfaction.

Today's clients navigate something more complex than the legal matter: uncertainty, anxiety, and the emotional weight of not knowing what comes next. In that scenario, the client experience becomes inseparable from the outcome. Your firm's ability to support clients through that uncertainty makes the difference.

When deciding whether to return to a law firm for future legal needs, clients don't base their decision solely on legal performance or client experience; they weigh both. Most clients (38%) evaluate law firms holistically. They want a strong legal result, but they also want to feel informed, supported, and cared for.

Firms that focus on one dimension at the expense of the other are only solving half the equation and alienating two-thirds of clients. The only path to 100% is an approach that values client experience equal to legal outcome.

Which matters more when deciding whether you would return to the same law firm for future legal needs?



68%
of clients say how they're treated factors into whether they'd return

Overall client satisfaction is high, but it doesn't reflect underlying differences between clients.

Most clients report feeling highly satisfied with both their legal outcome and their experience throughout the matter. But **overall satisfaction can be deceptively reassuring**. It blends together clients with very different priorities, expectations, and emotional journeys. It also tells us how clients felt at the end of their matter, but it doesn't tell us why they felt that way. Or what else they're feeling but not saying.

“

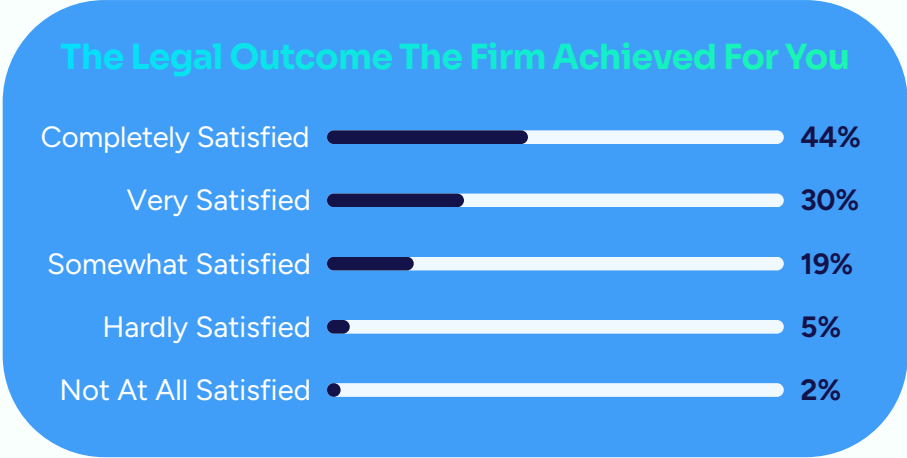
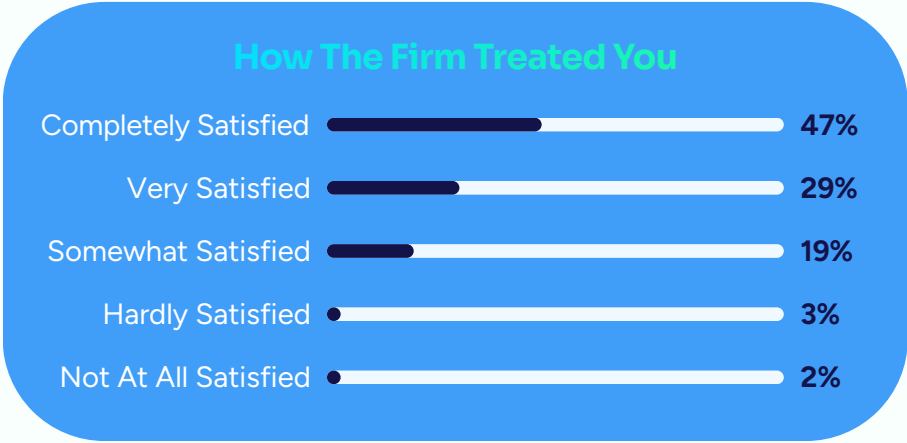
Think about all the times you've gotten a mediocre restaurant meal. The server asks, 'Was everything OK?' and you say, 'Yes, great, thank you!' It's human nature. A five-star Uber ride is one where you reach your destination, regardless of what else happened along the way. People don't always say what they're thinking. This is why a legal client may say they're satisfied even though they didn't feel particularly cared for or valued.



- Jordan L. Couch, Partner, Palace Law

”

Thinking about the law firm you hired, please rate your satisfaction with each of the following:



Each group of clients brings a unique set of expectations into the relationship, and those expectations shape how they interpret their legal journey.

To understand where firms are truly meeting client needs and where they may be falling short, we need to look beneath the surface. For starters, we segmented satisfaction by which matters more: legal outcome or client experience. Some differences quickly came into focus.

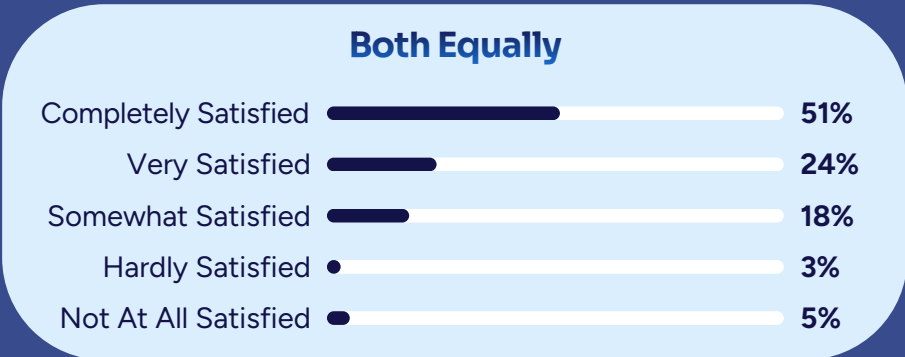
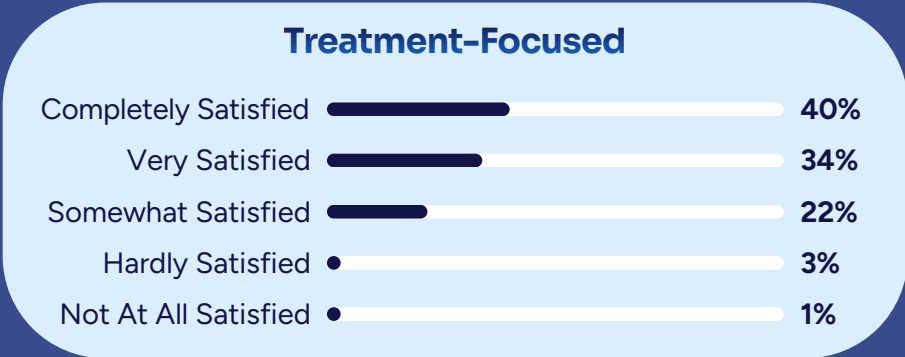
Clients who prioritize the legal outcome are most at risk of feeling dissatisfied with that very outcome. Because this group judges the firm primarily on the end result, their satisfaction is fragile; it's tied to external factors the firm can't fully control.

“Outcome-focused clients may also have higher-stakes cases; a personal injury matter or a workers’ comp case. When the outcome doesn’t go their way, it’s a big deal. It paints the entire experience in a negative light.”

-Jeff Robbins, Director of Client Experience, DM Injury Law

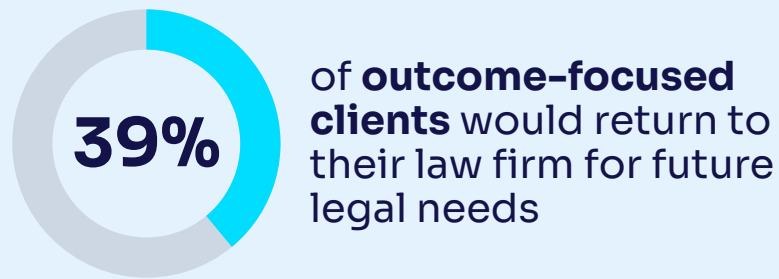


Thinking about the law firm you hired, please rate your satisfaction with the legal outcome the firm achieved for you.
(Segmented by which matters more)



Clients who prioritize how they are treated are most satisfied with their client experience.

Not only are experience-focused clients more satisfied as compared to the other groups, they're also more likely to return to their law firm with future legal needs. This may be because they're looking for things the firm controls: things like communication, responsiveness, and empathy. When they get it, they feel satisfied. Fortunately, great client service is achievable in every case. It's a matter of aligning actions and operations with client expectations.



Thinking about the law firm you hired, please rate your satisfaction with how the firm treated you. (Segmented by which matters more)



69% Completely or Very Satisfied



83% Completely or Very Satisfied



CHAPTER 2

The Silent Majority Problem

In an on-demand world where reputation and recommendations rule, firms must be competent and emotionally connected in order to scale growth.



Key Finding:

74% of clients reported being satisfied with their legal outcome, but only 41% would recommend their legal team.

Competence earns satisfaction. Connection earns advocacy.

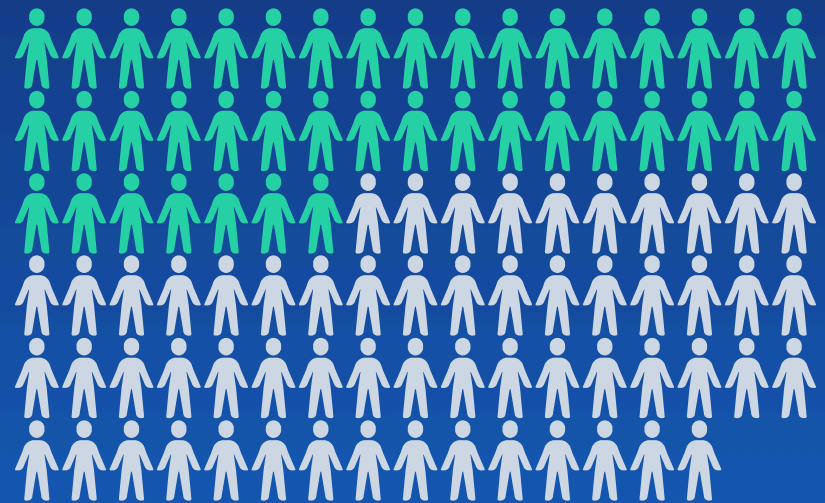
Today, most firms are creating more quiet clients than vocal ones. When you combine the clients who are not satisfied with the clients who are highly satisfied but not cared for, roughly 60% of clients are not advocating for their law firm. This is the Silent Majority. The survey results in chapter one show about 3 in 4 clients say they're highly satisfied with their law firm. Yet other survey results show that only 41% would recommend their legal team, and just 29% would leave a positive online review.

You don't tell your friends about the professional who did a good job. You tell them about the one who made you feel like you were their most important client. The one you connected with emotionally. The one who showed you they cared.

In legal services, the emotional component matters even more. Legal matters are often private, stressful, or even embarrassing to talk about. If the experience was simply "good," clients have little motivation to broadcast their divorce, injury, financial trouble, or dispute. But when a client feels genuinely supported, both by being kept in the loop and cared for throughout the process, the human connection they feel outweighs their discomfort. That's when they speak up. That's when they advocate.

The Silent Majority

Only 41% of satisfied clients would recommend their legal team to others in need.



THE SILENT MAJORITY PROBLEM

3 in 4

clients say they are highly satisfied with their law firm.

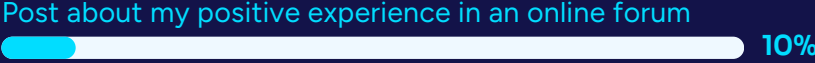
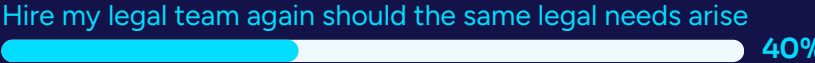
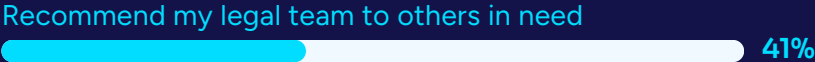
YET...



Only 29% would leave a positive review online, where buyers actually look before they hire.

Only a fraction of highly satisfied clients recommend or review their law firm.

Did you, or do you plan to, take any of the following actions?

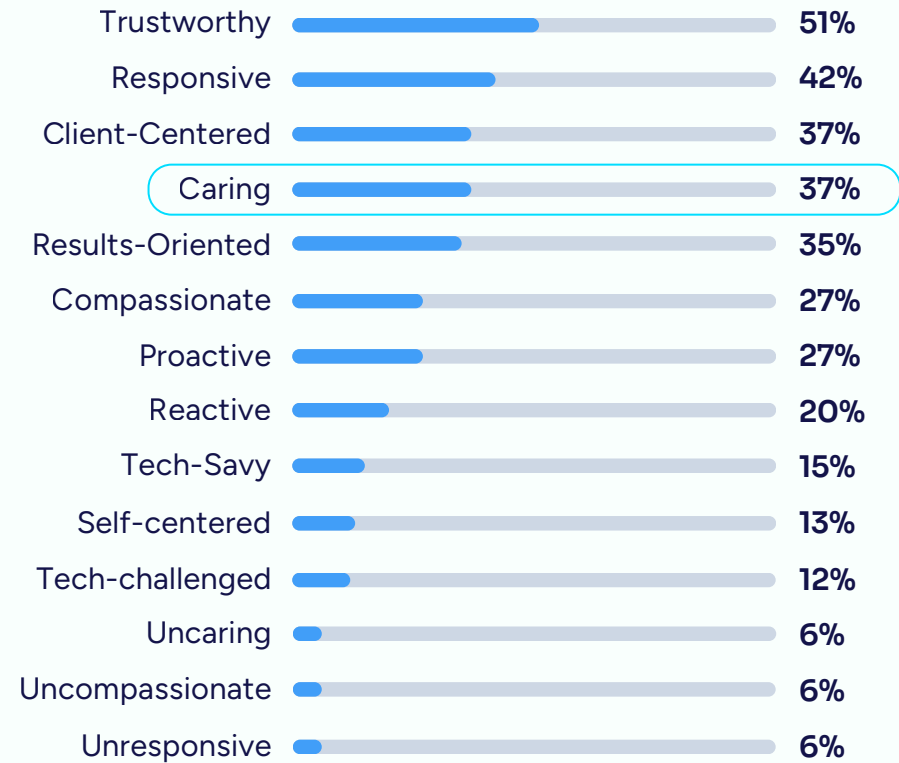


Satisfaction is a false signal. Despite being highly satisfied, only 37% of clients say their firm is caring.

On the surface, satisfaction is strong. If you stopped there, you'd conclude everything was fine. But when we examine satisfaction alongside how clients describe their firm, a different picture comes into focus. Only 37% described their law firm as "caring." This means a large share of clients would say, "They handled my case well," but not, "They made me feel like I mattered."

Satisfaction is a retrospective judgment about whether the firm was competent and whether the matter was handled correctly. It is not necessarily an indication that the client was cared for appropriately. This impacts the firm when the client is asked to rate their experience publicly, they're looking back and asking: Did they treat me appropriately? Were they polite? Was anything off? It's a check on whether the experience met the basic standards every law firm (or professional services firm) should be held to.

Which of the following adjectives, if any, describe the law firm you worked with?



“

One way to show clients you care is by providing regular proactive case updates. It shows the client, 'I recognize this matter is top of mind for you, and I want you to feel clear on where your case stands so you don't have to wonder.

- Paul Granieri, Director of Operations and Technology, Freeburg & Granieri, AP



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Can AI-assistance bring human connection to firms?

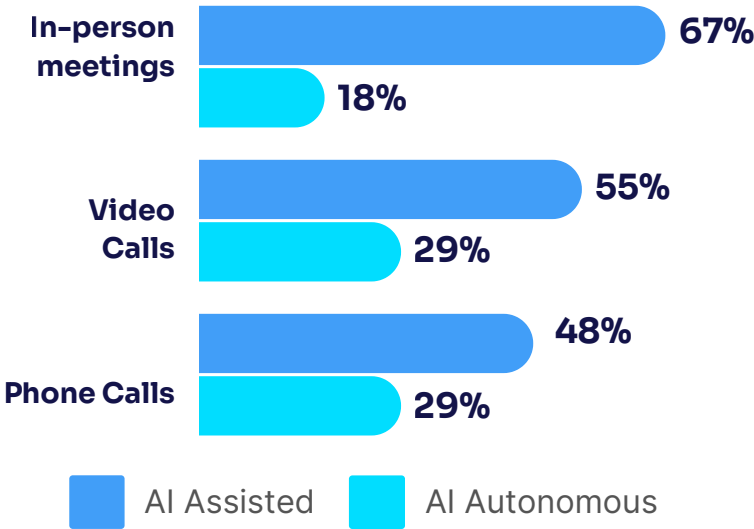
This brings us to where the money is going, and where it should be going instead.

Firms are adopting AI, but most of that investment is in back-of-house legal operations. Legal AI companies expedite document processing, but clients still wait days to hear back from their attorney. AI meeting recorders reduce legal team busy work, but clients don't feel the impact. **These AI tools improve internal workflows, but they don't improve the client experience.**

The Silent Majority remains silent because their experience hasn't changed. They still have to reach out about case updates. They still have to wait for answers. They're still left to wonder: Does anyone at the firm care about me?

On a positive note, the adoption of modern technology that provides on-demand information has risen year over year. Mobile app adoption increased from 12% to 32% while web-based portal adoption increased from 23% to 32%. As more firm leaders discover the technology available to them, we expect these numbers to continually increase. Ideally, AI improves both internal workflows and the client experience

Which, if any, of your client communication channels incorporate AI?



Which communication channels do you use with clients?





When shopping for a firm, clients most rely on recommendations from friends and family.

— JUST —
5%

of clients say **ads most influence their decision** to contact a law firm.

Before we look at where firms are spending marketing dollars, it's important to understand how people make buying decisions today.

Historically, law firms held the power. Potential clients learned about firms through whatever information crossed their path: a TV commercial during the evening news, a radio ad while cooking dinner, a billboard on a busy highway. Even when asking friends and family for recommendations, social circles were small.

Technology has shifted the balance of power. Today, clients are in control. They can access recommendations and reviews at scale: "Friends and family" extends far beyond the people they see regularly; it includes anyone in their network whom they're connected to online. And they can use search engines that instantly return a list of firms along with their Google Star Rating and online reviews.

The takeaway is clear: What clients say about you matters far more than what you say about yourself. Every interaction becomes part of a public record that shapes whether someone chooses to reach out.

5%

of clients rank "recommendations from friends and family" as most influential.

If you needed to hire a law firm today, which of the following sources would you use to research and evaluate your options before reaching out to a firm?

TOP FOUR SELECTIONS



BOTTOM FOUR SELECTIONS



People rely on trust signals, not promotions. Your reputation is your most powerful marketing.

Firms are making progress in how they spend marketing dollars, but they still have a ways to go.

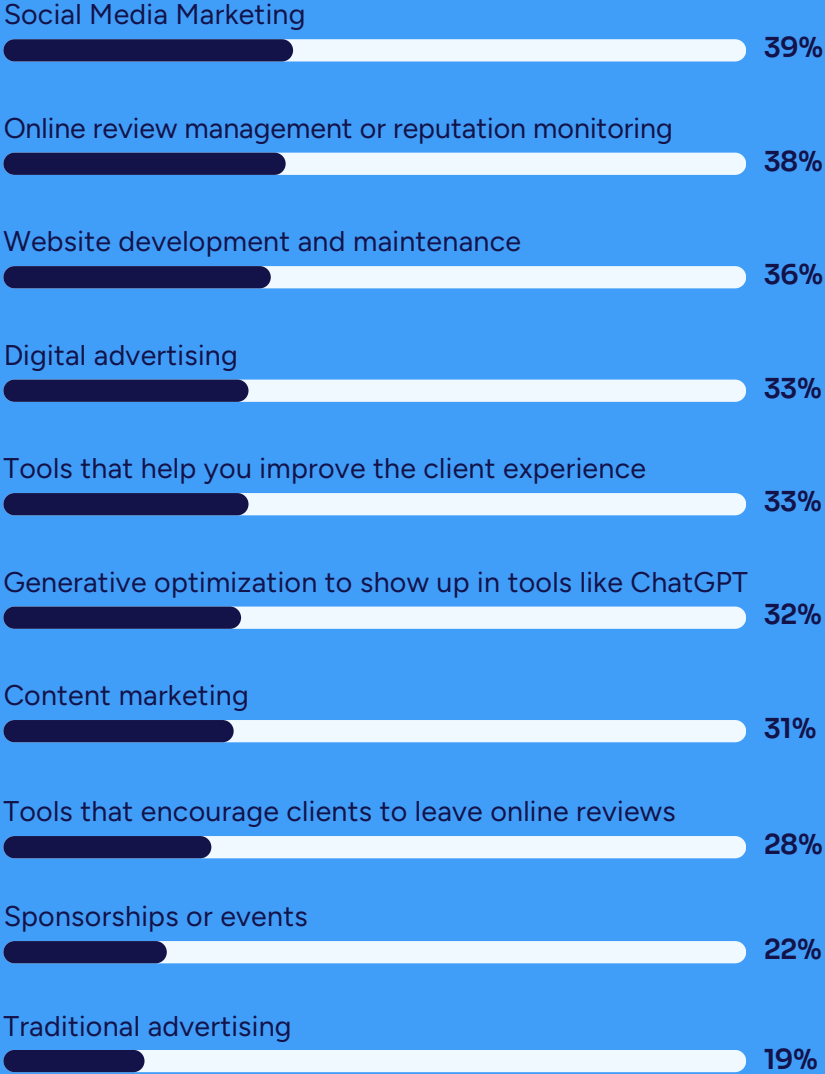
Traditional advertising, which only 5% of clients say most influences their decision to reach out to a firm, now sits at the bottom of the list of things firms spend money on with the goal of attracting new clients. Firms today are more likely to invest in tools that help them improve the client experience than in TV ads, radio commercials, and billboards. This represents real progress. But firms are still spending on marketing channels, like social media, that modern clients don't rely on to make buying decisions.

The data makes an argument that personal recommendations are your best marketing channel, which comes from tending to clients with strong client service.

Starting with client experience makes marketing easier. If you invest in client experience and earn a high Google Star Rating, digital advertising becomes a smart investment. That way, when someone searches "personal injury lawyers near me," your firm name appears at the top of the page, along with your score and your positive client reviews.

If your firm struggles to make marketing work, ask yourself: Do we have a marketing problem? Or an experience problem?

Which of the following does your firm currently spend money on with the goal of attracting new clients?



Client service is the new marketing program spend.

Attorneys estimate that 47% of their new clients already come through referrals. Imagine what that number could look like if firms redirected a portion of their marketing spend to systematically creating exceptional client experiences to generate recommendations, reviews, and referrals.

When it comes to reallocating marketing spend to align with how consumers buy today, the strategy is clear:

- 01 Invest in building systems that improve the client experience.
- 02 Invest in tools and activities that turn those positive experiences into online reviews.
- 03 Invest in surfacing positive client sentiment everywhere a potential client might look.

Approximately what percentage of last year's new clients came through client referral? **47%**

“
I'm seeing and hearing more firms investing in client experience these days. It doesn't seem like anyone thinks of these as marketing line items, but it makes so much sense when you see it laid out in front of you. Client experience is driving people to your door by way of recommendations, reviews, and referrals. Of course, it's a marketing investment.
-Ben Leader,
Managing Partner, Elrod Pope
”



CHAPTER 3

How Future Firms Build Systems Around CX

There's a direct line between how a firm operates and how its clients show up publicly to speak about their experience.



Key Finding:

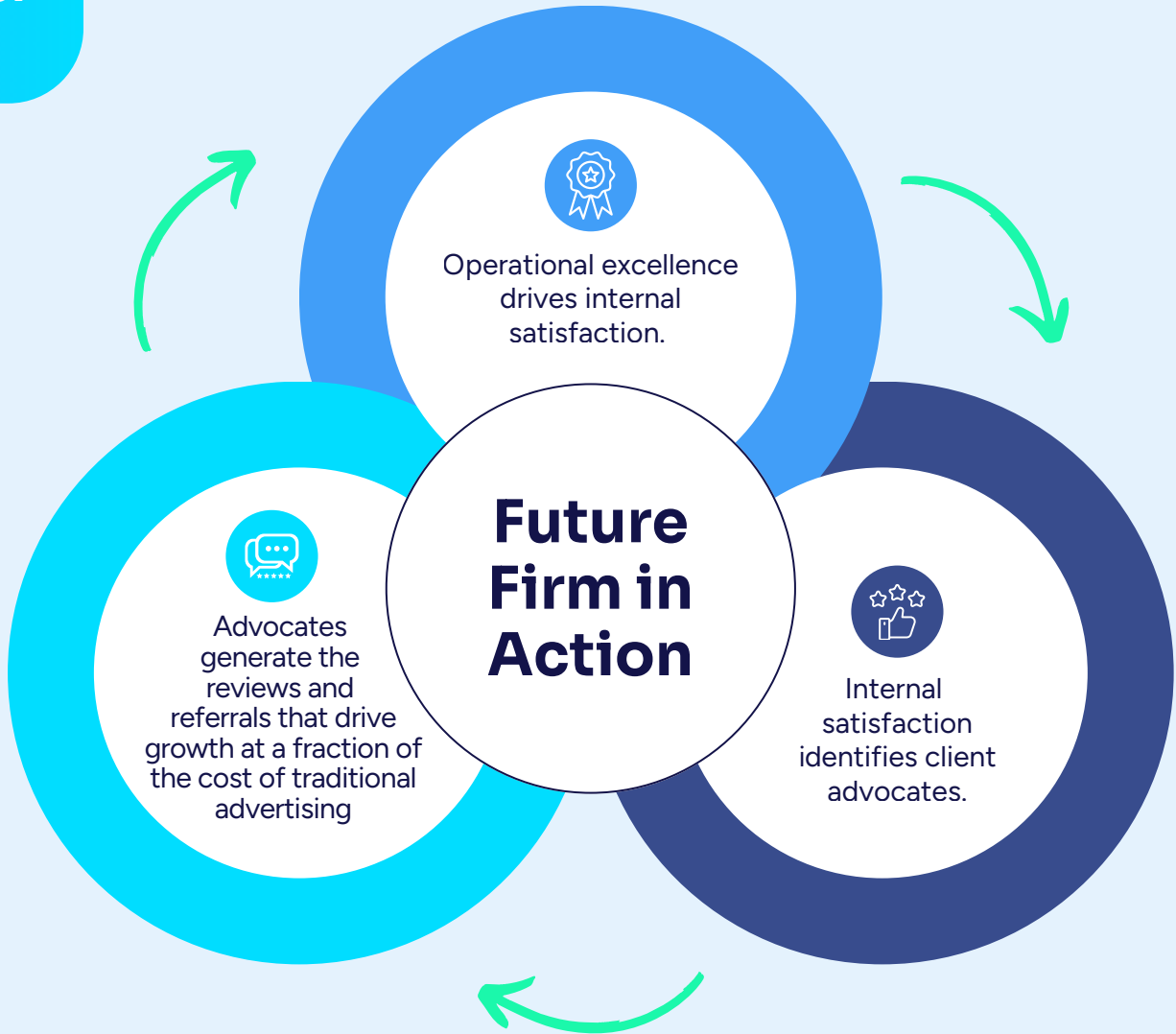
Operational investments in proactive communication and responsiveness drive higher Google review ratings.

Operational investments in communication drive higher Google review scores.

This year, for the first time, anonymized data from the Case Status Client Experience Platform draws a direct line from how a firm operates to how its clients show up publicly. Firms that invest in operational excellence (faster response times, proactive updates, consistent communication) see higher internal satisfaction and care indicators. Those high scores allow the platform to identify genuinely happy clients and prompt them to leave a review at the right moment. The result? Higher external review scores on platforms like Google that are directly attributable to those happy clients.

When firms build systems around client experience, something powerful happens: Clients do the marketing for them. Firms that invest in operationalizing client experience create a revenue flywheel.

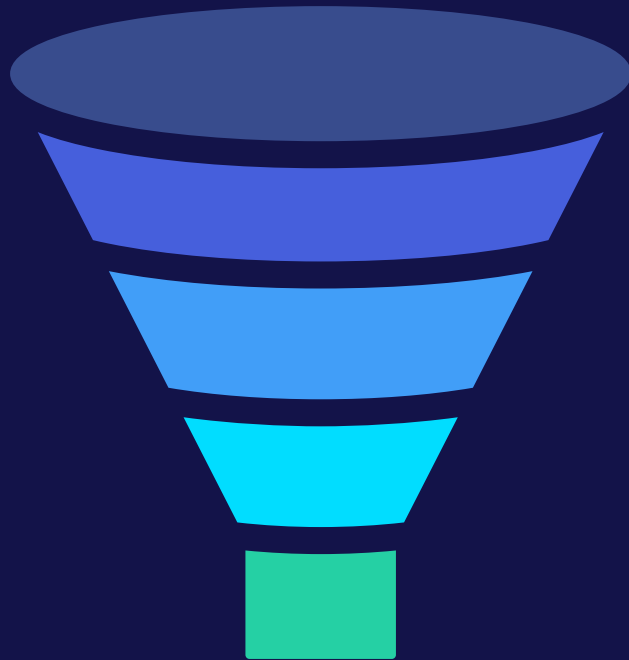
This is a Future Firm in action.



We analyzed a sample of firms in Q1 2026.

6,459

Google Reviews



92%

Matched to Platform Clients

With that match established, we could ask and answer a question no one in Legal Services has been able to answer with data:

Does how a firm engages its clients, operationally and day to day, predict how those clients show up publicly?

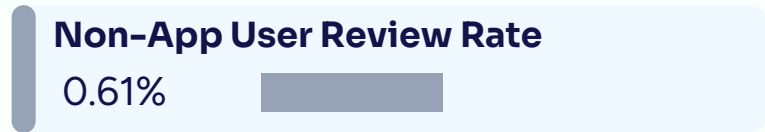
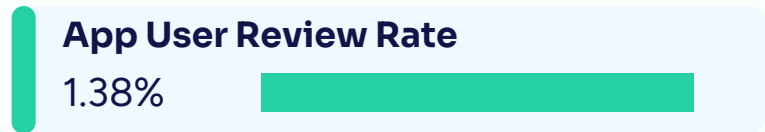
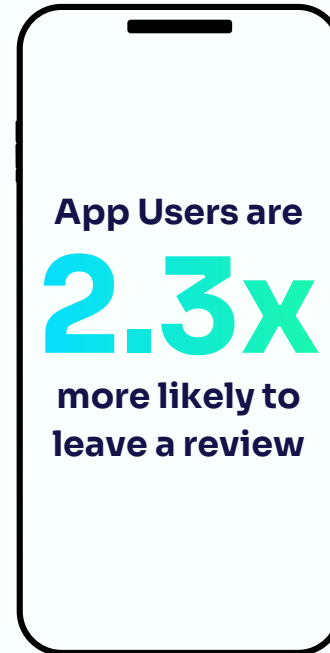
The answer is overwhelmingly yes.

Three operational levers consistently separate firms with strong public reputations from those without:

Operational lever 1: Client app engagement is a review engine.

Clients who use the Case Status mobile app are 2.3 times more likely to leave a Google review than clients who don't. The app review rate is 1.38% compared to 0.61% for non-app users. That may sound like small numbers, but across thousands of cases, **the difference compounds into hundreds of additional public reviews.**

Every client adoption is an investment in the firm's public reputation.



The Case Status app doesn't just improve client experience - it generates public advocacy at 2.3x the rate.

Operational lever 2: NPS creates a review flywheel.

Net Promoter Score (NPS) is a widely used metric in other industries not only to measure client satisfaction, but also to go deeper into loyalty and the likelihood of recommendation. Clients whose relationship is actively measured through NPS are 4.9 times more likely to leave a Google review. But the impact goes beyond volume. Among clients who score as Promoters (NPS 9–10), 96% leave a five-star review. Passives (7–8) drop to 90%. Detractors (0–6) drop to 78%.

The gradient is clear: satisfaction predicts competency, while measuring beyond satisfaction predicts external advocacy with remarkable precision. The measuring standard and device must go beyond simple competence satisfaction. **When firms measure their relationship with the client systematically and regularly, they create a flywheel: identify promoters, prompt them at the right moment, and convert internal happiness into public reputation.**

This is not aspirational. It’s a mechanism, and across thousands of NPS-tracked clients in our data sample, it’s working.

Clients with NPS data are
4.9x
more likely to leave a Google Review

Promoters (9-10) 1862 Reviews	4.90 avg stars	96% 5-star
Passives (7-8) 149 Reviews	4.78 avg stars	90% 5-star
Detractors (0-6) 185 Reviews	4.27 avg stars	78% 5-star



NPS is a review engine



Operational lever 3:

Settlement is the peak moment to ask for reviews.

Not all moments in a legal matter are created equal. This is especially important when working with outcome-focused clients. Clients at the settlement or resolution stage are 6.4 times more likely to leave a review than clients with active cases. The review rate at settlement is 3.26%, compared to just 0.51% during active case work and 0.32% at intake.

This makes intuitive sense: Settlement is the emotional peak of the client's journey. The uncertainty is resolved, the outcome is known, and the client is reflecting on the experience. **Firms that ask for a review at the settlement or resolution stage are meeting clients when they're most willing to speak.**

Firms that wait until after close, or don't ask at all, miss the peak window.

Review rate by case lifecycle stage - when are clients most likely to leave a review?

Settlement Phase = Peak Review Moment

Settlement / Resolution

1,360 Reviews / 42K Cases

3.26%
Review Rate

Closed / Completed

2,194 Reviews / 84K Cases

2.63%
Review Rate

Active Case

2,137 Reviews / 419K Cases

0.51%
Review Rate

Intake / New

264 Reviews / 84K Cases

0.32%
Review Rate

Firms that wait until after close to ask for a review, or don't ask at all, miss the peak window.

When firms build systems around client experience, their clients do the marketing for them.

The three multipliers are: **app engagement, NPS measurement, and timing.** They don't work in isolation. They compound. When a firm gets a client on the app, measures their satisfaction, and prompts them to leave a Google review at the right moment in their legal journey, the result is a weighted average star rating of 4.82 across nearly 6,500 reviews. Ninety-four percent of those reviews are five stars.

Client advocacy is not random. Firms that engage clients consistently, measure satisfaction, and ask at the right moment generate overwhelmingly positive public outcomes.



CHAPTER 4

Legal Services' Change Paradox

The future of law will not be written by those who cling to the past. It will be written by those willing to question, adapt, and build with courage.



Key Finding:

Attorneys say they're willing to change how they operate to better serve clients, but firms haven't built systems around client experience.

9 in 10 attorneys are willing to change how they operate to better serve clients, but firms still rely on communication channels from a former era.

Attorneys believe they're ready to evolve, and they're aware of what today's legal clients expect and deserve: an on-demand experience. This represents real progress. Attorneys are moving away from the traditional beliefs rooted in an era when law firms held most of the power. Modern technology has shifted that power toward the client, and the vast majority of attorneys now recognize that firms must meet rising client expectations. **The challenge is no longer shifting mindsets. It's translating awareness into a system of action (and adoption).**

In spite of feeling open to changing, most firms remain anchored to traditional communication channels like phone calls, emails, and in-person meetings, all of which create administrative work for legal teams and leave clients waiting for answers and wondering if their legal team cares.

Being willing to change isn't enough. Without systems that translate intention to action, the status quo wins.

93%

of attorneys say their firm is willing to change how they operate to better serve their clients but firms still rely on communication channels from a former era.

Which Communication Channels do you use with your clients?



Attorney mindsets have shifted. Firm behaviors have not. This is the Change Paradox.

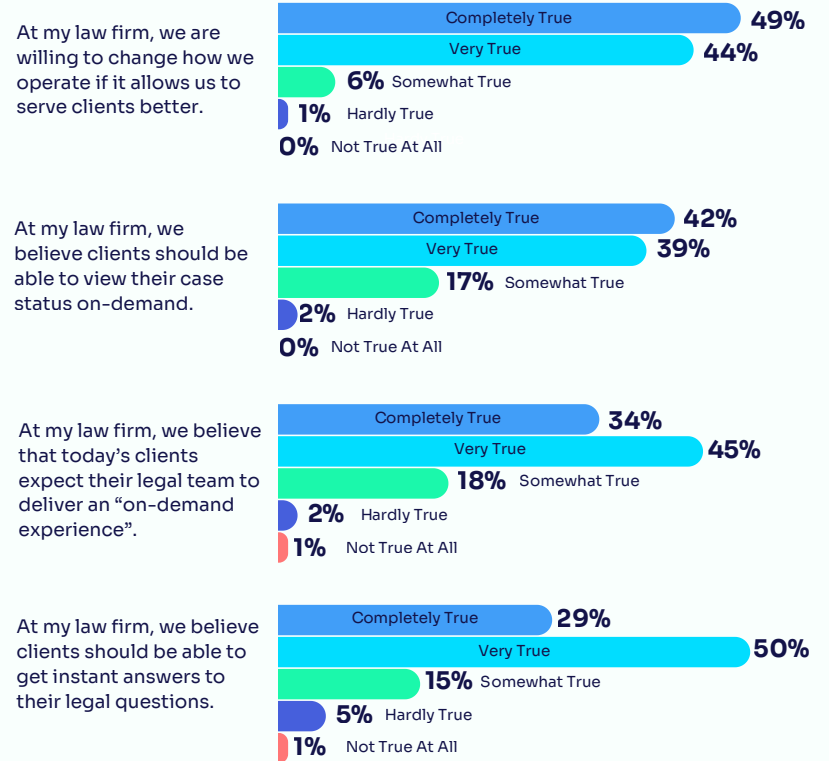
Even though attorneys overwhelmingly believe clients want a modern, on-demand experience, and even though 93% say they're willing to change how they operate, the day-to-day reality inside most firms looks much like it has since the late 1990s.

This contradiction between what attorneys believe and how firms operate is Legal Services' Change Paradox.

Attorneys are thinking differently and moving in the right direction in terms of awareness and mindset. But firm operations remain anchored in old patterns that prevent them from delivering the modern experience they know clients expect and deserve, one that eliminates waiting and uncertainty in favor of clarity and confidence.

How true are each of the following statements?

Attorney Survey



Attorneys aren't resisting change because they're indifferent. They're stuck because, without the right systems in place, good intentions default to old habits. Behavioral economists call this the intention-action gap: Humans gravitate toward the familiar, even when they know better.

-Brian Page, Chief Legal Officer, Trust Guss Injury



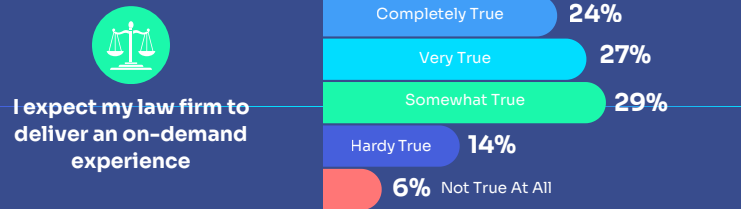
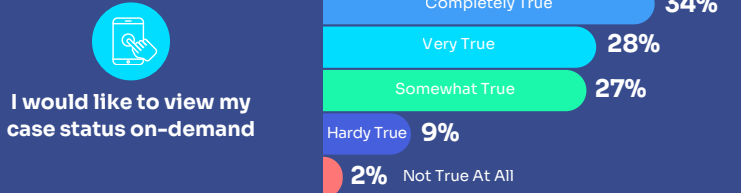
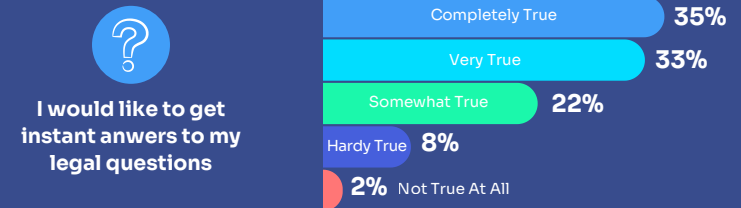
Most clients want instant answers to their legal questions and the ability to view their case information on-demand.

One of the most surprising findings in this year's study is that attorneys believe client desire for an on-demand experience is even more intense than it actually is. While 79% of attorneys believe clients expect their legal team to deliver an on-demand experience, 51% of clients say they expect their firm to deliver this.

On reflection, this finding makes sense. People under-report desire for experiences they've never had, but once they experience real-time access, it quickly becomes the new baseline. As tools like self-service law firm mobile apps and client portals become more common over the next few years, we expect to see a sharp rise in the number of clients who say these statements are completely or very true.

How true are each of the following statements?

Client Survey



79%
of attorneys believe that clients expect their law firm to deliver an on-demand experience

VS

51%
of clients expect their law firm to deliver an on-demand experience

Attorneys consistently overestimate how well they're serving clients.

It's a pattern we've now tracked across two years of data. Ninety-eight percent of attorneys believe their clients are completely or very satisfied with client service and with their legal outcome. In reality, only 76% of clients report feeling highly satisfied with the client experience, and only 74% of clients say they're highly satisfied with their legal outcome. Attorneys understand what clients want, they know they're competent, and they genuinely believe they're meeting those expectations. (Satisfaction scores don't tell them otherwise.) But because day-to-day operations still rely on outdated and manual methods, the experience clients feel doesn't match the experience attorneys think they're providing.

How satisfied do attorneys believe clients are?

Attorneys Estimate Clients are 98% Satisfied with how they were treated



VS

How satisfied are clients actually?

Only 76% of clients say they were highly satisfied with how they were treated



How satisfied do attorneys believe clients are?

Attorneys Estimate Clients are 98% Satisfied with their legal outcome



VS

How satisfied are clients actually?

Only 74% of clients say they were highly satisfied with their legal outcome



Firms are stuck in a vicious cycle that's constraining their growth.

- Clients judge firms holistically, both on the legal outcomes and the client experience along the way.
- And while most clients say they're highly satisfied, many are unwilling to recommend or review their firm, and just 1 in 3 describes their firm as caring.
- Attorneys, for their part, are open to changing how they operate and are fully aware that today's legal consumers expect an on-demand experience.
- Yet in practice, firms default to what's familiar: traditional communication channels that leave clients waiting for answers and feeling uncared for.
- This change paradox creates a cohort of clients who are satisfied but silent.
- In a market where recommendations are the No. 1 influencer of buyer decisions, silence is costing firms.
- But instead of investing deeply in the systems that would elevate the client experience and drive advocacy, many firms channel resources into back-of-house AI tools clients never feel and marketing tactics that don't influence buying decisions.
- Every dollar spent on a billboard is a dollar not spent fueling a referral-driven growth engine.
- And so the cycle continues.

This isn't just theory. The data in this report indicates that the cycle exists, and that cycle can be broken.

Fossil Firms are competent. Future Firms are competent and connected.

Most firms today operate like Fossil Firms. They believe that technical legal skill is enough. And while most say they're willing to change to serve clients better, their operations remain anchored to communication channels that worked in another era, trapping them in a cycle of reactive communication. Attorneys work on cases for weeks without contact, then field calls from anxious clients wondering if anything is happening with their case. Clients feel satisfied, but they don't feel cared for. And it shows in their lack of willingness to advocate for the firm. Firms that break the cycle, Future Firms, know they must excel at both legal outcomes and client experience. They build systems to make sure they deliver an exceptional client experience, even when they're heads down working on cases.

Two levers define how Future Firms operate:

On-demand access that eliminates uncertainty.

Future Firms adopt technology that gives clients real-time visibility into their case status and answers to common questions, so clients get the clarity they crave without chasing their firm.

Operational efficiency that frees attorneys to connect and brings the human element.

Technology automates routine communications and status updates. And since it integrates with the firm's case management platform, there's less manual record keeping. Attorneys reclaim time they can reinvest in the human-to-human interactions that create connection and drive advocacy.

The path is clear, and the tools exist.

The only question now is which path will your firm take?



Study Methodology

Overview

For Case Status's second annual Legal Client Experience report, we partnered with Researchscape, an independent market research firm, to survey over 230 practicing attorneys and law firm executives and over 1000 U.S. consumers. After filtering responses based on qualifying questions, the report was drafted against the 430+ practicing attorneys, law firm executives, and legal clients in the United States who qualified via the criteria below. All data was collected in February 2026.

LEGAL CLIENT SURVEY:

The results in this report are from an online survey of 1,004 U.S. adults aged 18 and up that was fielded in February 2026. Survey design, programming, fielding, and data analysis were conducted by Researchscape, an independent market research firm. To qualify for the survey, respondents had to have hired a law firm within the past five years. The data was weighted to the U.S. population by nine demographic questions. The credibility interval for questions answered by all respondents is ± 4 percentage points.

Demographics:

- ▶ State: California (12%), Texas (9%), Florida (7%), New York (6%), Pennsylvania (4%)
- ▶ Census Area: South Atlantic (20%), Pacific (16%), East North Central (14%), Mid-Atlantic (13%), West South Central (12%), Mountain (8%), West North Central (6%), East South Central (6%), New England (5%)
- ▶ Children at Home: Yes (26%), No (74%)
- ▶ Relationship: Married (52%), Single (31%), Divorced (11%), Widowed (6%)
- ▶ Age: 18–34 (29%), 35–44 (17%), 45–54 (15%), 55–64 (16%), 65+ (23%)
- ▶ Education level: Less than HS (11%), HS graduate (27%), Some college (29%), College graduate (21%), Postgraduate (12%)
- ▶ Income: < \$50K (34%), \$50–\$99K (29%), \$100K+ (37%)
- ▶ Ethnicity: White, non-Hispanic (61%); Hispanic (18%); Black, non-Hispanic (12%); Asian (6%); Other race (3%)
- ▶ Gender: Man (50%), Woman (50%)

Topline results presented in this report were weighted to be representative of the overall population using the above variables.

ATTORNEY SURVEY:

The results in this report are from an online survey of 237 U.S. lawyers and law firm executives that was fielded in February 2026. Survey design, programming, fielding, and data analysis were conducted by Researchscape, an independent market research firm. To qualify for the survey, respondents had to work in the legal industry and could not specialize in corporate law or in-house counsel law. The responses were not weighted.

DEMOGRAPHICS:

- ▶ Industry: Legal (100%)
- ▶ Job Title: Associates (49%), Partners/Executives (51%)
- ▶ Headquarters: In the United States (100%)
- ▶ Specialization: Corporate Law (27%), In House Counsel Law (16%), Personal injury (34%), Malpractice (7%), Disability (31%), Workers compensation (34%), Mass tort (31%), Immigration (38%), Estate planning (19%), Employment disputes (21%), Criminal defense (20%), Bankruptcy (12%), Family law (23%), Probate law (15%), Property and insurance (23%), Other (5%)
- ▶ Headcount: 2–10 attorneys (30%), 11–50 attorneys (29%), More than 50 attorneys (41%)
- ▶ State: California (14%), New York (9%), Pennsylvania (9%), Texas (6%), Florida (5%)
- ▶ Census Area: South (30%), West (28%), Northeast (25%), Midwest (17%)
- ▶ Gender: Man (87%), Woman (13%)
- ▶ Age: 18–34 (17%), 35–44 (61%), 45–54 (16%), 55–64 (3%), 65+ (3%)
- ▶ Generation: Baby Boomers (5%), Generation X (14%), Millennials (76%), Generation Z (5%)

CROSS TAB METHODOLOGY

The closed-ended questions in the survey were cross-tabulated by all of the listed questions. However, we only report cross-tabulations with statistically significant differences that might have some practical value:

- A statistically significant difference is one that cannot be attributed to chance at a 95% confidence level: 19 times out of 20, the differences would exist in the target population.
- A practical difference, in our opinion, is at least a 10 percentage point difference between two groups. While a 2-point difference might for large cell sizes be statistically significant, it is unlikely to make any practical difference to most business plans.
- Demographic questions against demographic questions were ignored as they offer little insight (e.g., older people are more likely to be retired, Gen Xers are more likely to have children than younger generations).
- Rather than compare subgroups to other subgroups individually, we compared each subgroup to the aggregate of all other subgroups. This is easier to present and visualize than column comparisons (which require tagging each column with a letter) and differentiates at the low end as well as the high end. Since this approach uses the entire sample, rather than a subsample of two subgroups, it provides greater statistical power and reduces the chance that differences are false discoveries.

ADDITIONAL METHODOLOGY NOTES

- We chose to include findings that might have some practical value to most business plans, even when those findings didn't come back as we expected them to, or in our favor.
- Survey questions are published verbatim so readers can verify exactly what respondents saw. You can see the full list of survey questions on the following pages.

SURVEY QUESTIONS - LEGAL CLIENT SURVEY

1. Which of the following have you ever hired a lawyer for?
2. How long ago did you use that law firm?
3. Thinking about the law firm you hired, please rate your satisfaction with each of the following.
4. Did you, or do you plan to, take any of the following actions?
5. Which matters more when deciding whether you would return to the same law firm for future legal needs?
6. If you needed to hire a law firm today, which of the following sources would you use to research and evaluate your options before reaching out to a firm?
7. Which of these sources would most influence your decision to contact a law firm?
8. Which of the following adjectives, if any, describe the law firm you worked with?
9. Which communication channels did you and your legal team use after you hired the firm?
10. How well, if at all, did these communication channels allow you to get instant answers to your questions?
11. How true is the following statement? "I am open to interacting with my law firm via AI to get instant answers versus waiting for a human to respond."
12. How true is each of the following statements?

SURVEY QUESTIONS - ATTORNEY SURVEY

1. Which of the following practice areas, if any, do you specialize in?
2. Which term best describes your role?
3. In general, how would your clients rate their satisfaction with each of the following?
4. In your opinion, which matters more to clients when deciding to return to your law firm for future legal needs?
5. Which of the following adjectives, if any, describe your firm?
6. How true is each of the following statements?
7. Which communication channels do you use with clients?
8. Which, if any, of your communication channels incorporate AI?
9. How true is the following statement? "At my law firm, we believe that clients are open to interacting with our law firm team via AI (chatbots, voicebots, etc.) to get instant answers vs. waiting for a human to respond."
10. Which, if any, of the following technologies do you provide for client self-service?
11. What questions can your clients get answers to on a self-service basis without any work from your team?
12. Do you track how quickly your firm responds to client inquiries?
13. How true, if at all, is each of the following statements?
14. Which methods, if any, do you currently use to measure your client experience?
15. To what extent do you agree with the statement: "AI tools will become an essential part of law firm client experience in the next three years"
16. What is your firm's attitude toward using AI tools to improve the client experience?
17. What is your law firm's average star rating on Google reviews?
18. Approximately what percentage of last year's new clients came through client referral?
19. What is your firm's Net Promoter Score?
20. How did your firm's overall revenue change in 2025 compared to 2024?
21. Which of the following does your firm currently spend money on with the goal of attracting new clients?
22. To the best of your knowledge, which of these does your firm spend the most on each year?