

## Law Firm Client Interviews – Goals And Rationale

The goal of the client interview program is to garner information which will enhance a law firm's business development and marketing efforts by gaining insights into client needs and objectives. This information is essential to gaining new business while providing specific recommendations (from the eyes of the client) as to how the firm can ensure client retention and enhance the client relationship.

Law firms need accurate information about how their clients evaluate existing and future legal needs, service requirements, and how they assess the "value" provided by the firm and the attorneys with whom they work. Too often, firms and attorneys define the "value" they bring to the representation without regard to the client's frame of reference and there is often a great divide between the two definitions. Interviews provide data which can be used to determine and develop specific strategies related to client retention and business development.

Recent studies indicate a growing dissatisfaction with outside counsel.

- 96-100% of clients interviewed said they approve and value client satisfaction surveys.
- 22% of all law firm clients consider switching firms because of issues with their current firm.
- Typically only 25-30% of a firm's clients are completely satisfied.
- Low satisfaction means that 70% or more of the firm's clients may be open to pitches from competing firms.
- 60% of clients interviewed in person will give their law firm new business within 90 days after being interviewed.

By understanding what clients "like" and "dislike" in the relationship a firm can develop information by which it can differentiate itself from its competition by addressing identified client needs as well as service and relationship issues. Firms report increased revenues after responding to the information provided by the interviews. Although there are many examples of the benefits that are derived from interviews, we recall a recent situation when a client advised us that it was considering moving all its work to another firm for a number of reasons, most notably due to the lack of responsiveness to administrative requests. The client assumed that the firm did not value the relationship. The firm responded immediately and addressed the client's specific concerns that ultimately saved a \$250,000/year client. Clearly all interviews are not this timely, but we can assure you without exception, that every interview will provide information that is beneficial to every firm.