



# Client Experience Post-COVID

How CPA firms leverage ClearlyRated to protect revenue and grow their firm

Eric Gregg, CEO & Founder of ClearlyRated



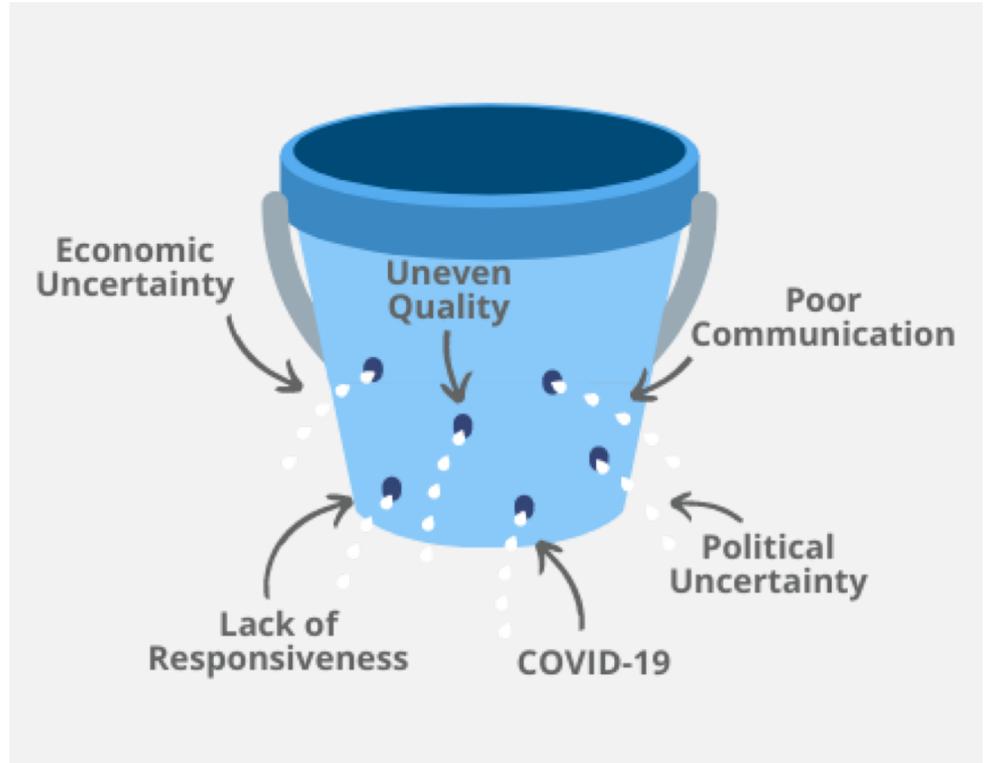
2020 in a nutshell...

**WELCOME TO 2020**

**IF YOU DON'T ALREADY SUFFER  
FROM AN ANXIETY DISORDER,  
ONE WILL BE ASSIGNED TO YOU**

@FIT4ARN

**Now, more than ever, it's essential to be asking your clients for feedback. Your business depends on it.**



# About Me



# About ClearlyRated



Industry-specific NPS® client survey program

Measure the client experience

Build credible proof of service with testimonials and star ratings

Benchmark firm performance against the industry

Earn an award for service excellence in accounting



Diversity, equity, and inclusion-focused NPS® employee survey program

Measure employee satisfaction

Understand perceptions about DEI at your firm

Boost recruiting efforts with employee testimonials

Earn an award for exceptional employee satisfaction

# Over the next hour, we'll discuss:



Why asking clients and employees for feedback is critical in these unprecedented times?



The financial implications of the client experience, and how it drives revenue.



The current state of the legal client experience.



What a systematic client feedback initiative can / should look like.



Best practices for NPS and common missteps to avoid.



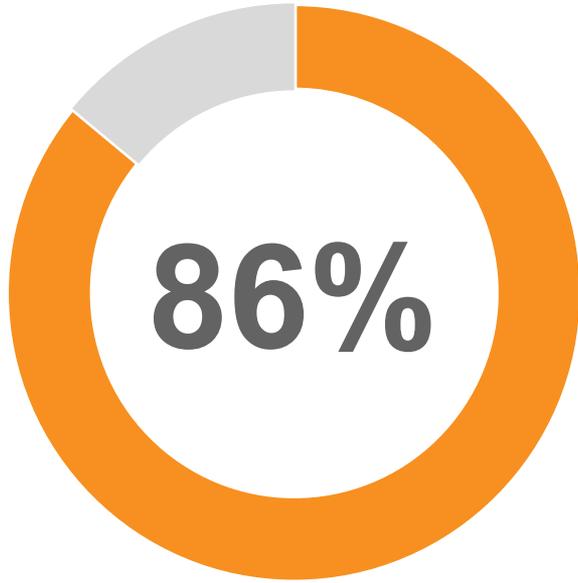
# COVID-19: The case for asking clients for feedback *now*

# Client churn is likely to increase, even as the economic climate improves.

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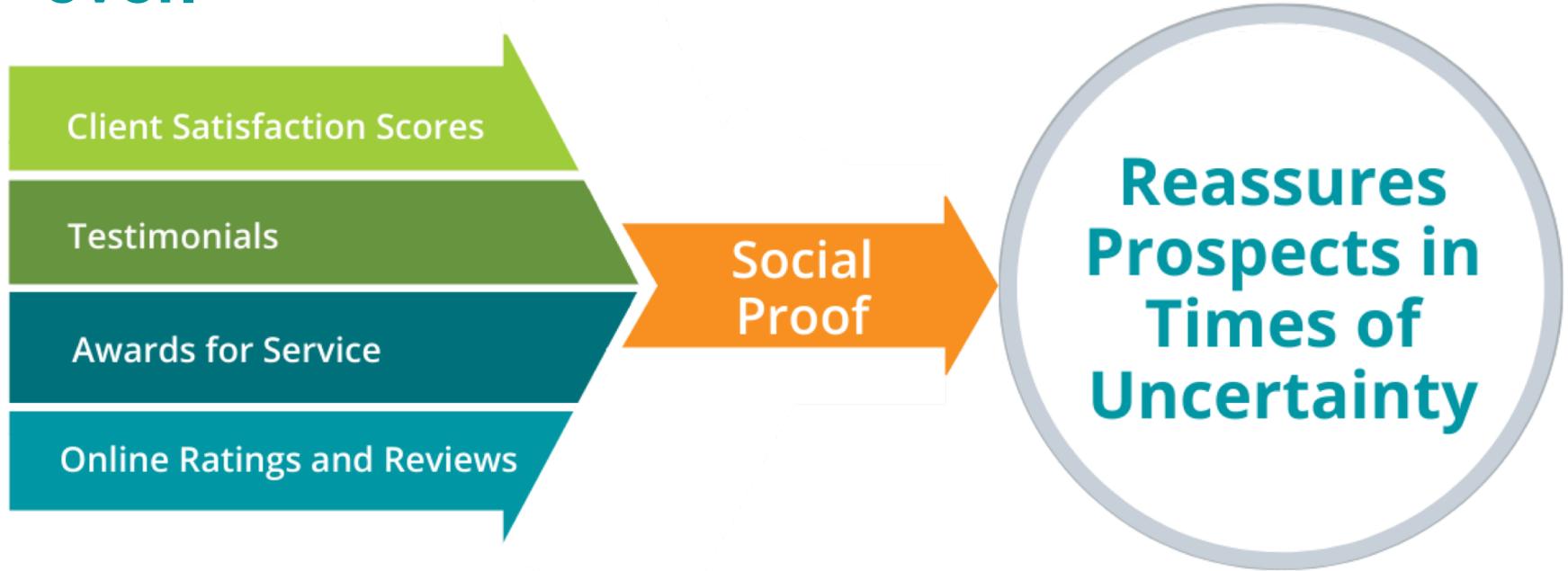
**If you've weathered the first wave of client churn or contraction of work, the last thing you need to deal with is the preventable churn that's driven by service-related dissatisfaction.**

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86% of accounting firms that work with ClearlyRated have identified one or more at-risk clients through their survey program... and that is before COVID flipped our economy on its head.

# Economic uncertainty drives risk-aversion, making social proof more important than ever.



# Your team deserves some good news to celebrate.

“

*"The ClearlyRated survey process is so easy, and the results are well worth the price. While it is a nice differentiator for us, it is also a massive morale boost to our employees during our busiest time of year."*

**- Jennifer Cantero**

Director of Marketing & Sustainability  
at Sensiba San Filippo LLP

**Emilie has been more than great throughout the entire process. She has been thorough about what steps to take and has helped me with**

**Lauren is the absolute best and is always available to assist with our request! She's patient, and truly treats us like a valued client. Thanks for everything Lauren!**

**Always responsive; always human; genuinely interested in our experience with ClearlyRated.**

**Now is also a critical time to be asking  
for feedback from your employees**

# The case for asking employees for feedback now:

1. The members of your internal team are the lifeblood of your clients' experiences.
2. Employee turnover represents a huge expense to your business.
3. Unexpectedly losing a key employee creates outsized disruption in uncertain times.
4. An employee satisfaction survey can, and should, help your firm understand how every member of your staff perceives their own safety, inclusion, and worth in light of stated company goals and unspoken company culture.

# Measure the Client and Employee Experience with Net Promoter® Score

How likely are you to recommend our firm to a friend or colleague?

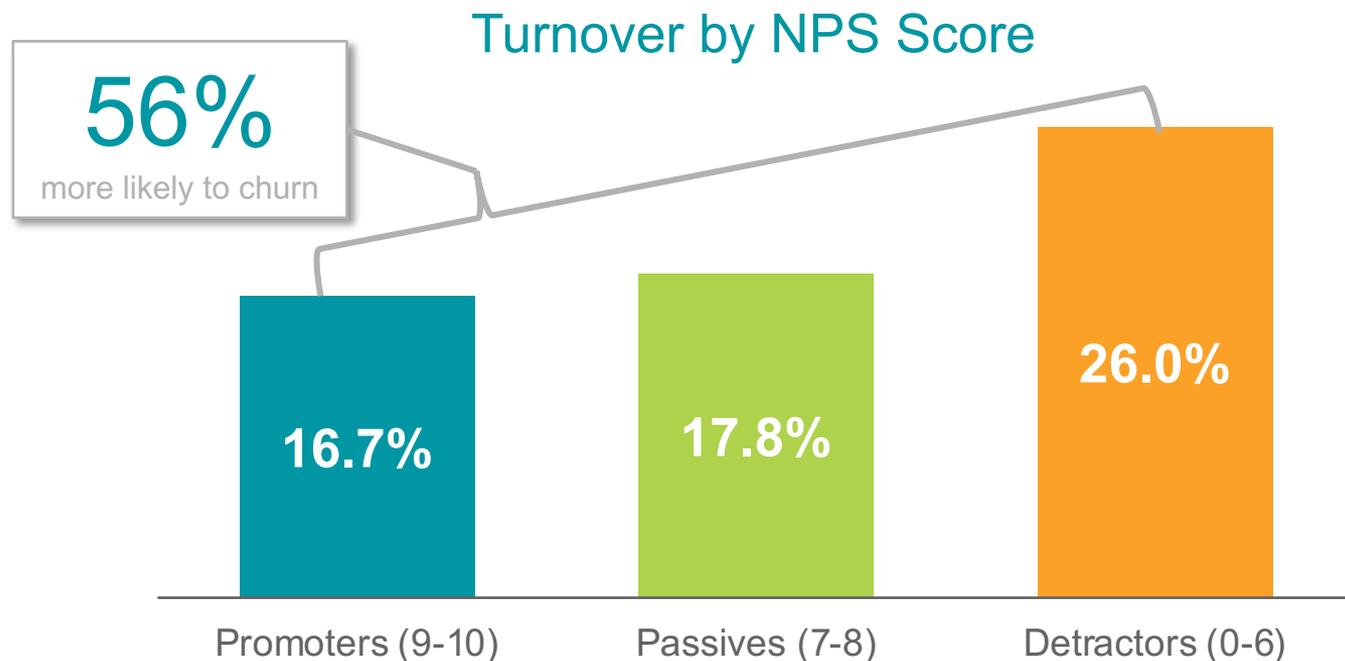


$$\text{Net Promoter® Score} = \% \text{ Promoters} - \% \text{ Detractors}$$

A photograph of two women in a professional setting, possibly a meeting or collaborative work environment. The woman on the left is looking down thoughtfully, while the woman on the right is looking at a laptop screen. The image has a green tint and a semi-transparent white text overlay.

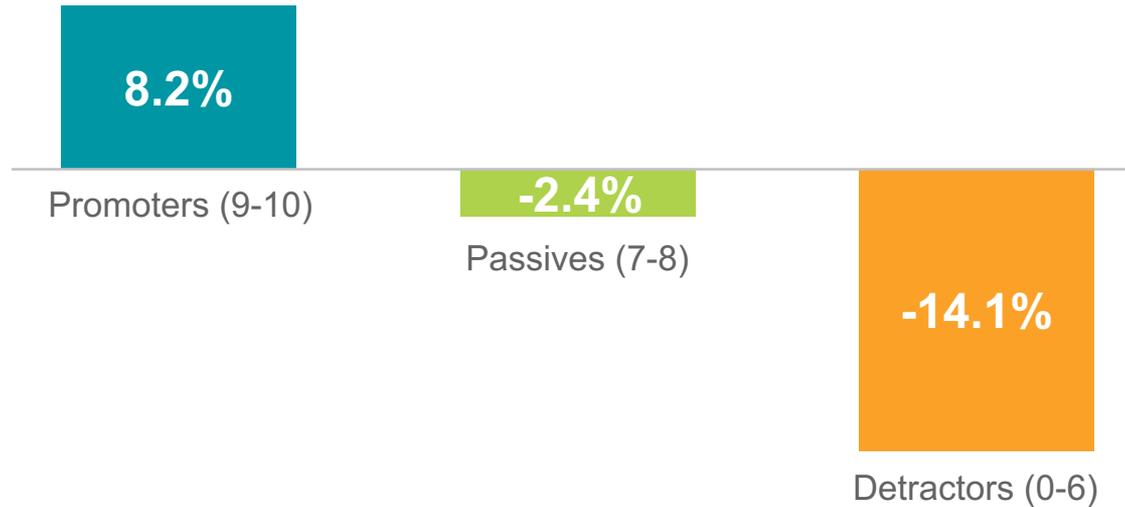
# Financial Impact: How the client experience influences revenue

# NPS is a predictor of client churn



# But even Detractors who don't leave spend less next year.

## Change in Following Year's Spend



# Promoters of accounting firms

*Compared to Detractors, Promoters of their primary accounting firm are...*

*More committed to only using their current primary accounting firm*

**2x**

more likely to be fully committed

*More likely to plan an increase in annual spend with their primary accounting firm*

**39%**

more likely to increase spend

*More likely to provide a testimonial for their primary accounting firm*

**6x**

"very likely" to provide a testimonial

*More likely to share an online, public review for their primary accounting firm, if asked*

**42%**

more likely to provide an online review

SOURCE: ClearlyRated 2019

# It's hard to differentiate on service without proof



*"BDO brings world-class resources and exceptional service to each and every one of our clients."*



*"At RSM, our client-centric approach is grounded in our strong industry perspective and desire to deliver unparalleled client experiences."*



*"From our origins in 1919, an innovative and client-centric culture has flourished at CohnReznick."*



*"BKD's mission is to always strive for excellence in providing services to clients, create rewarding career opportunities and maintain sound professional, business and financial standards."*



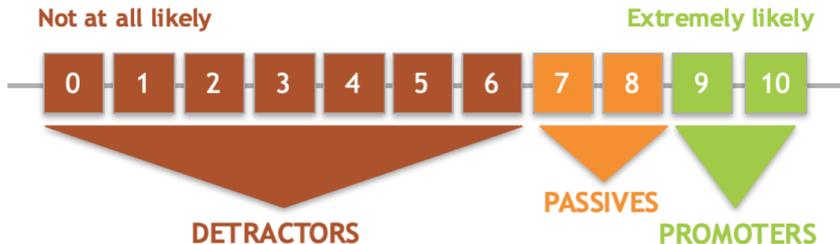
*"We are committed to providing the most efficient and expeditious services, while always maintaining the highest ethical standards."*

# Current State of the Accounting Client Experience

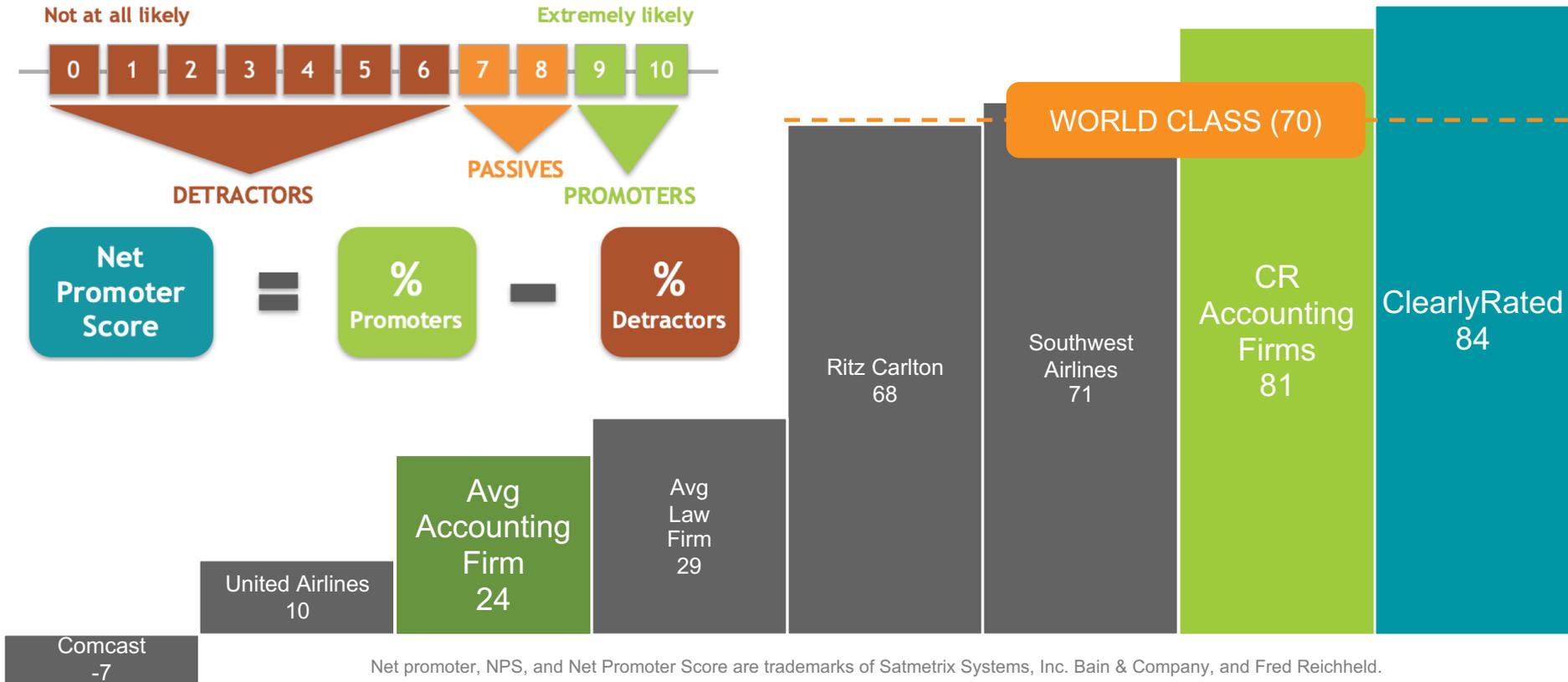
# MEASURE & DIAGNOSE

Client Service

## How likely are you to recommend our firm to a friend or colleague?



$$\text{Net Promoter Score} = \% \text{ Promoters} - \% \text{ Detractors}$$



# NPS Drivers

 = % impact on NPS when “Always”

The firm is [always / sometimes / never] proactive in their approach to helping me.



The firm [always/sometimes/never] delivers high quality, error-free work.



The firm’s services are a good value, given the cost.



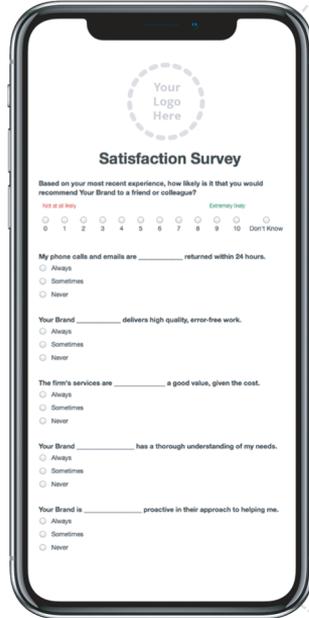
Contacts at the firm [always/sometimes/never] return my phone calls and emails within 24 hours.



The firm [always/sometimes/never] has a thorough understanding of my needs.



# 8-Question Survey



## Satisfaction Survey

Based on your most recent experience, how likely is it that you would recommend Your Brand to a friend or colleague?

Not at all likely Extremely likely

0  1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10  Don't Know

My phone calls and emails are \_\_\_\_\_ returned within 24 hours.

- Always
- Sometimes
- Never

Your Brand \_\_\_\_\_ delivers high quality, error-free work.

- Always
- Sometimes
- Never

The firm's services are \_\_\_\_\_ a good value, given the cost.

- Always
- Sometimes
- Never

Your Brand \_\_\_\_\_ has a thorough understanding of my needs.

- Always
- Sometimes
- Never

Your Brand is \_\_\_\_\_ proactive in their approach to helping me.

- Always
- Sometimes
- Never

What is the primary reason behind the rating you provided?

What is one thing we could be doing differently to increase the value you receive from us?

Net Promoter Score (NPS) question

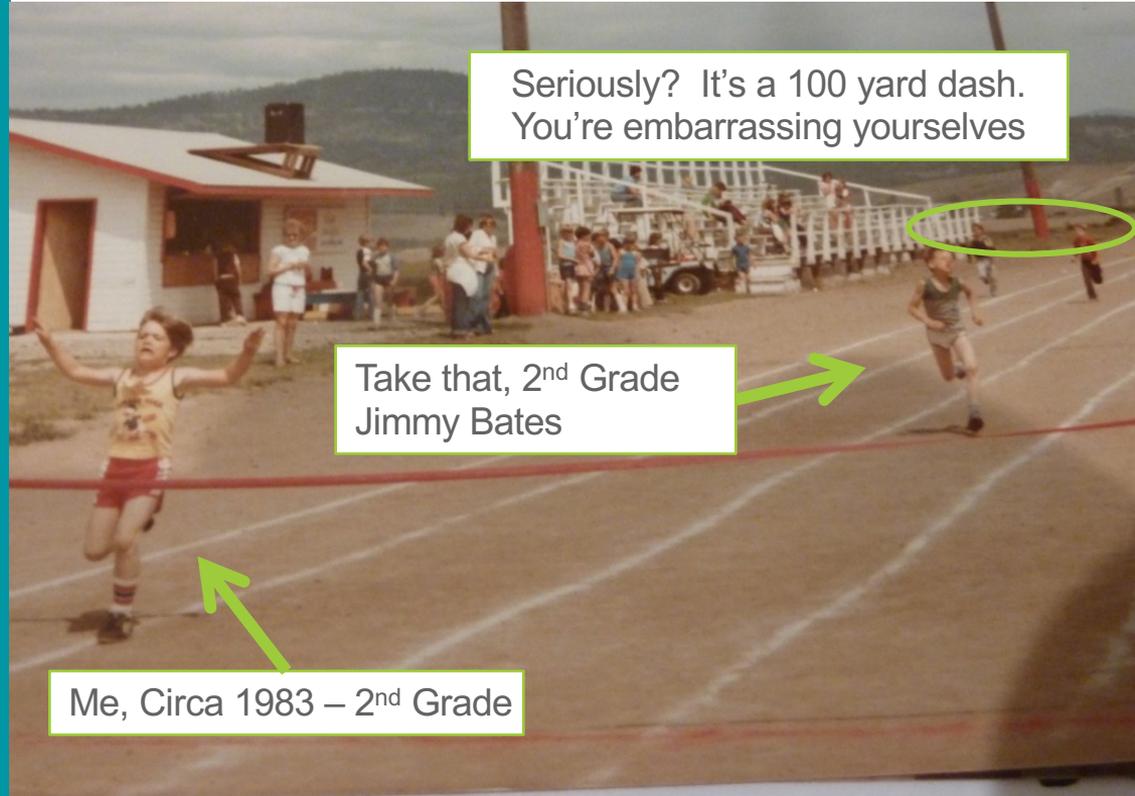
NPS Driver Questions



# Best Practices in Client Experience and NPS Design

# Evolving Cx for Accounting

*Evolution will happen with or without you*



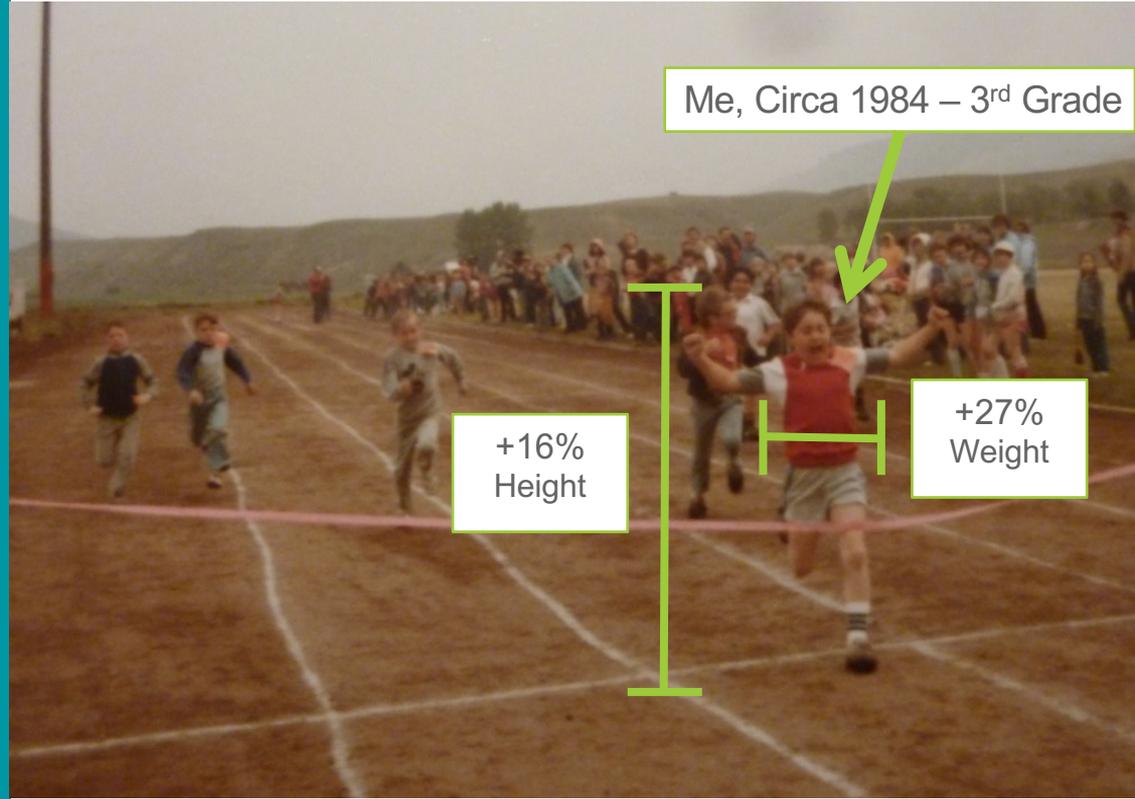
Seriously? It's a 100 yard dash.  
You're embarrassing yourselves

Take that, 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade  
Jimmy Bates

Me, Circa 1983 – 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade

# Evolving Cx for Accounting

*Evolution will happen with or without you*



# Best Practice #1: View NPS as a tool for firm growth

- From report card to basis for growth



## Best Practice #2: Build a process to support action

- It may be that your process isn't the problem (or the solution), chances are your execution is.

## Best Practice #2: Build a process to support action

- It may be that your process isn't the problem (or the solution), chances are your execution is.
- **Commit to taking action on feedback in real time.**

# Best Practice #2: Build a process to support action

Contact Information  
and Respondent  
Details

NPS, Comments &  
Loyalty Driver  
Answers

**New Detractor Response!**

**Jane Nixon** No Change

Brand: XYZ Networks  
Branch: Seattle

Reporting Units: Account Manager: Jim Halpert  
Recruiter: Darryl Phibbin  
Company: Pan Am

Email: [jane.nixon@demoemail.com](mailto:jane.nixon@demoemail.com)

Phone: 261-045-4208

Company: Pan Am

Tags: None

Survey Type: End of Assignment

Based on your most recent experience, how likely is it that you would recommend XYZ Networks to a friend or colleague?  
3

What is the primary reason behind the rating you provided?  
I was completely disregarded at the end of my assignment and couldn't get anyone to call me back, even though we had a great working relationship throughout the past 6 months.

What is one thing we could be doing differently to increase the value of our services to you?  
Treat your people better. I will tell everyone not to use you!

XYZ Networks typically responds to any issues or questions I have within 24 hours.  
No

Prior to the end of my assignment, someone at XYZ Networks reached out to discuss other opportunities.  
No

XYZ Networks communicated well with me throughout the course of my assignment.  
Yes

I received performance feedback from XYZ Networks throughout the course of my assignment.  
Yes

Choose a resolution after following up:

[Resolution in Progress](#) | [Can't Resolve](#) | [Not an Issue](#) | [Resolved](#) | [Escalate](#)

SET ISSUE STATUS  
Resolution In Progress

ASSIGN ISSUE  
 Select a user

ADD ISSUE FOLLOWERS (RECEIVE EMAIL UPDATES)  
 x

Type in some notes... (required)

Status updated by Eric Gregg

[Update Issue](#)

## Best Practice #2: Build a process to support action

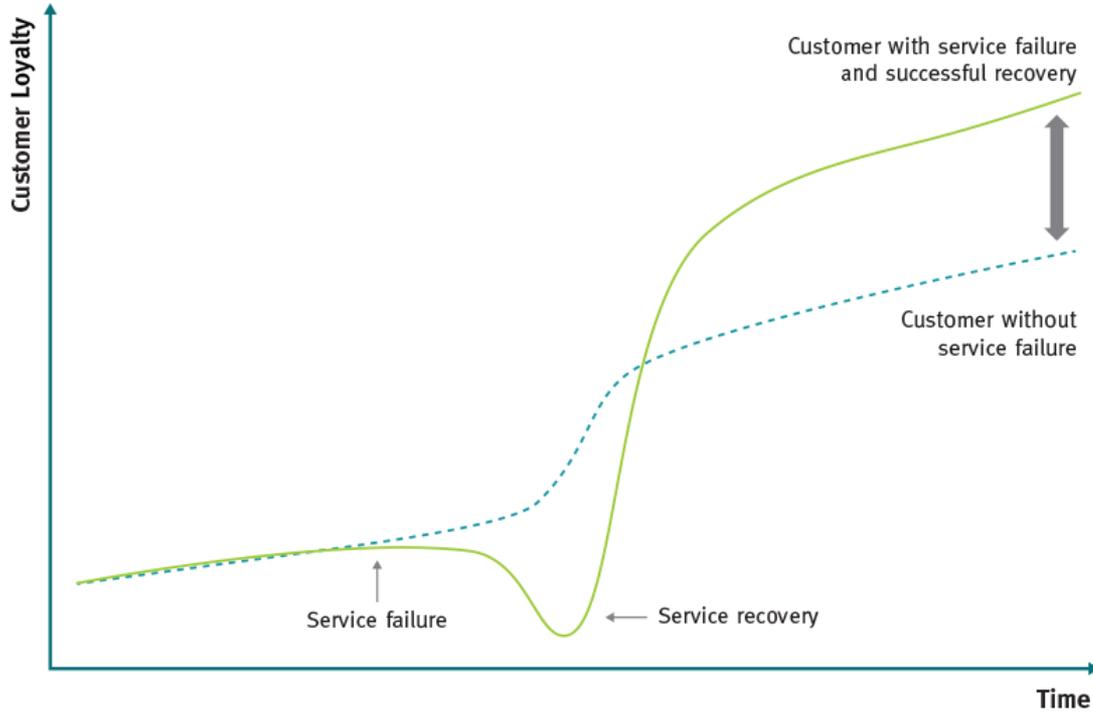
- It may be that your process isn't the problem (or the solution), chances are your execution is.
- Commit to taking action on feedback in real time.
- **Have a triage plan in place.**

# Best Practice #2: Build a process to support action

The right solution only matters if it happens in time to make a difference.

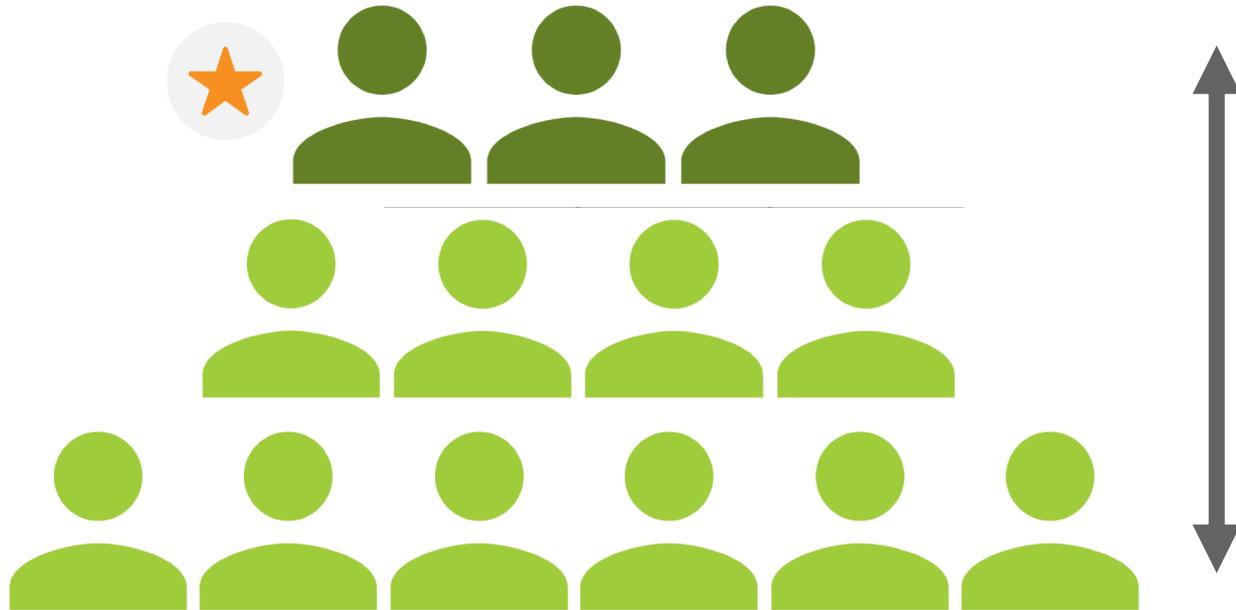


# The Service Recovery Paradox



# Best Practice #3: Lead from the top, but engage throughout the organization

- Partner-level buy in and leadership is critical
- Celebrate service wins at all levels



# Best Practice #4: Analyze with intelligence

## “What Happened”

**“All the News That’s Fit to Print”**  
**The New York Times**  
LATE EDITION  
VOL. CLXXIX No. 58,733 NEW YORK, TUESDAY, JUNE 23, 2020 \$3.00

### Trump to Halt Worker Visas Through 2020

**Tech, Child Care, Even Medical Jobs in Peril**

By MICHAEL J. SHEAR and NICHOLE J. HIRSHMAN  
WASHINGTON — President Trump on Monday temporarily suspended new work visas and halted hundreds of thousands of immigrants from making employer-sponsored visas, putting a freeze on the entry of immigrants into the country. It is a sweeping move, which will be in place for at least the rest of the year. Mr. Trump blocked visas for a wide variety of jobs, including those for computer programmers and other digital workers who were critical to the technology industry, as well as for work-study program and on-park visitor visas for other applicants. The move also restricted the ability of American companies with global operations and international employees to transfer foreign executives and other employees to the United States for months or years-long stints. And it blocks the return of immigrants who are employed in companies in the United States.

### CLUSTERS POP UP IN NEW LOCATIONS AS STATES REOPEN

**BARS AND CHURCHES HIT Virus Cases' Resurgence Signals a Risky Phase and Long Struggle**

By FRANK BRUNO  
Other months of lockdown in which, with one of the exceptions of bars, restaurants and meeting places, the nation is entering a new and uncertain phase of the pandemic. Now COVID-19 clusters have been found in a surprising number of places, a sign that the virus is spreading in every imaginable place in between.

### Forget About Coffee and Doughnuts

When New York City allowed offices to reopen Monday, workers returned to an unfamiliar world. Clockwise from top left: a security guard behind glass; demonstrating a socially distanced elevator ride and temperature-checking stations. Coverage on Pages A6 and B1.

### Flip Arizona? Biden Backers See a Chance

This article is by Alex Berke, Heidi Kling, Benjamin Muller and Jan Rayburn.

### Pandemic Pushes New Yorkers Into Legal Limbo

Many people are in the court system in regional markets to virtual hearings on court video screens. Their attorneys have either been cut out or forced out of the courtroom.

### Amid City's Lockdown a Backlog of Pending Cases Exploded

The health crisis has halted the normal operation of the courts.

# VS

**The New York Times** @nytimes  
Breaking News: The New York City Marathon, the world's largest, has been canceled this year amid concerns about the spread of the coronavirus  
7:03 AM · Jun 24, 2020 · SocialFlow  
572 Retweets 928 Likes

# Best Practice #4: Analyze with intelligence

## Relational Survey Strategy

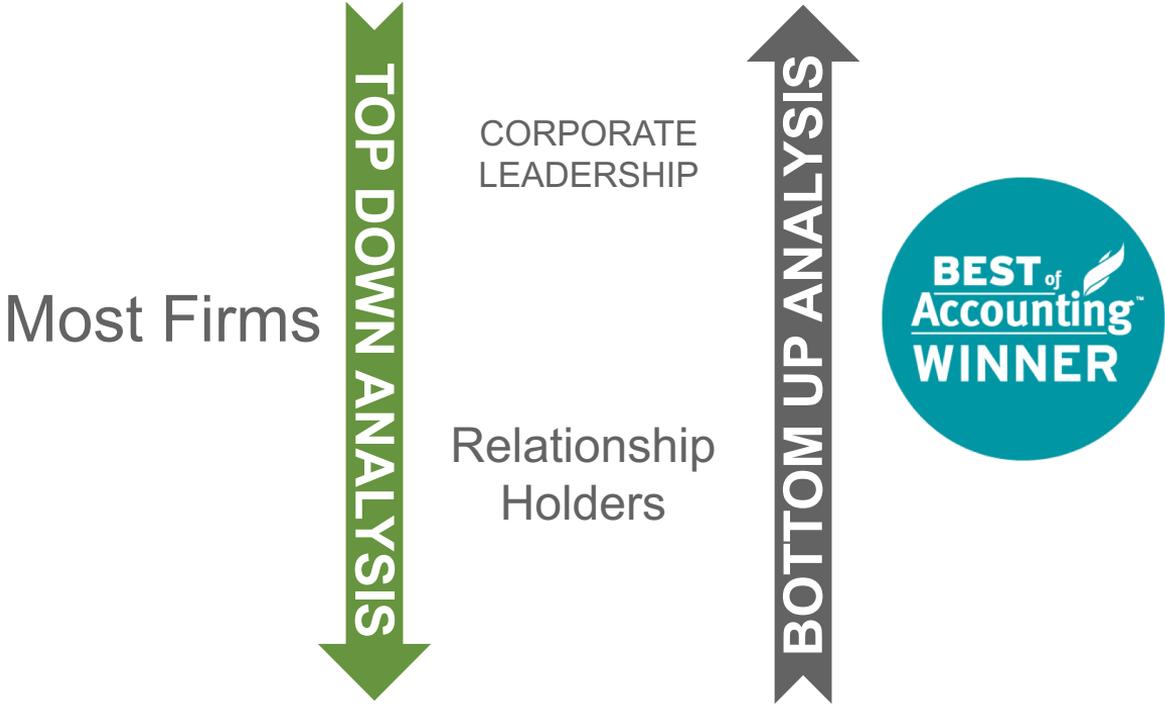
- Measures the client experience on an overall / longer-term basis
- Allows for annual or semi-annual checkpoints and feedback
- Answers the question: “What Happened?”

VS

## Transactional Survey Strategy

- Measures client satisfaction at critical points in their experience with your firm (i.e. during onboarding, end of engagement, post-tax season, at billing, etc.)
- Empowers decision-making and improvement with real-time feedback on a rolling basis
- Answers the question: “What is Happening?”

# Best Practice #4: Analyze with intelligence



# Best Practice #4: Analyze with intelligence



Jack M. Kolmansberger  
Chief Marketing Officer

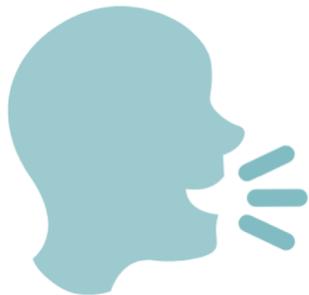
“

*It quickly became logical to utilize feedback not only for the macro level of how we are doing across the board, but also for the micro level of how we are perceived by specific clients. Now, whenever we need a piece of information on a recent client rating or performance in a specific segment of the business, it's as easy as logging in to our dashboard and filtering the feedback. We treat our survey dashboard like a living document and a living part of our business.*

”

- Jack Kolmansberger

# Best Practice #4: Analyze with intelligence



“Give me an update every week, please”

POLICY:  
Updates every 2  
weeks



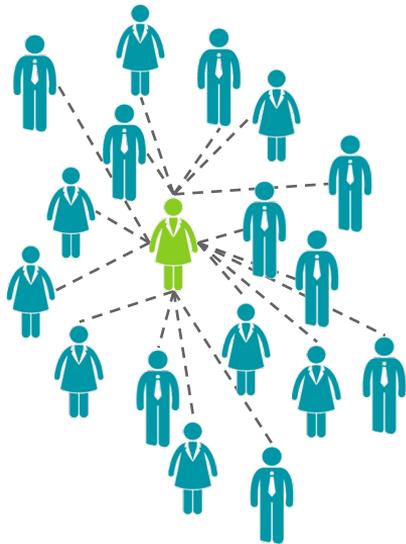
**NOBODY IS HAPPY**



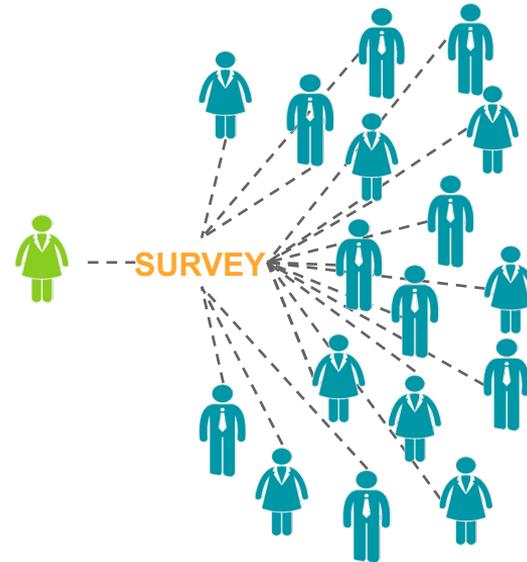
“Weekly updates are annoying, just update me once a month.”

# Best Practice #5: Leverage technology to scale ROI

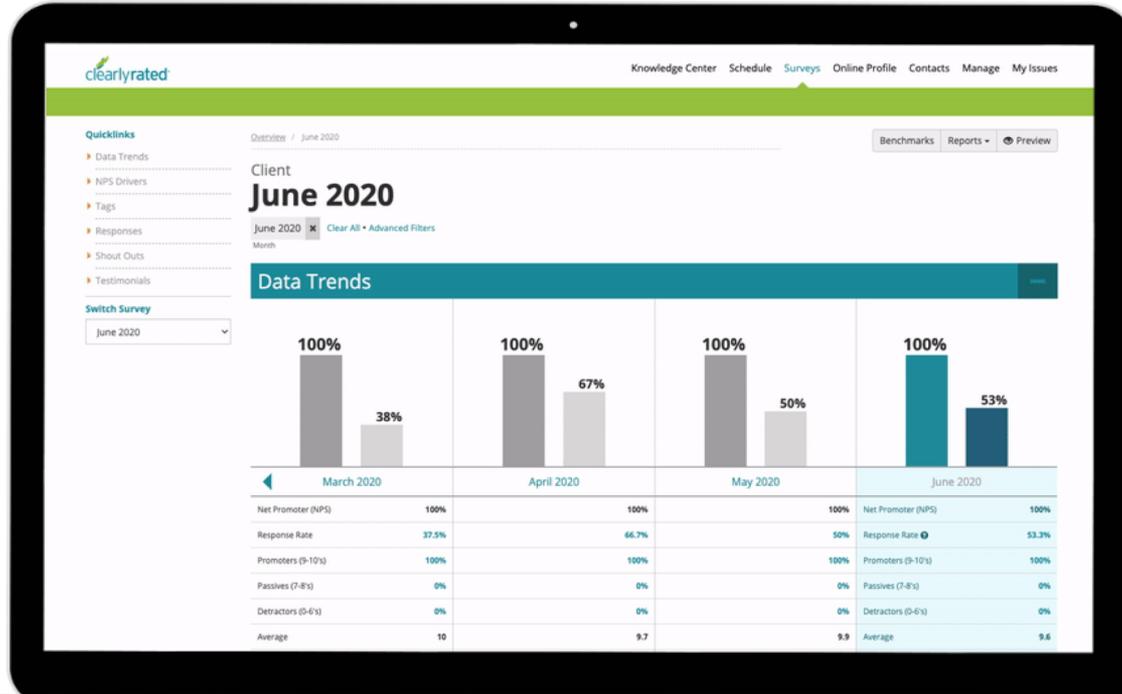
Fragmented  
Doesn't Scale



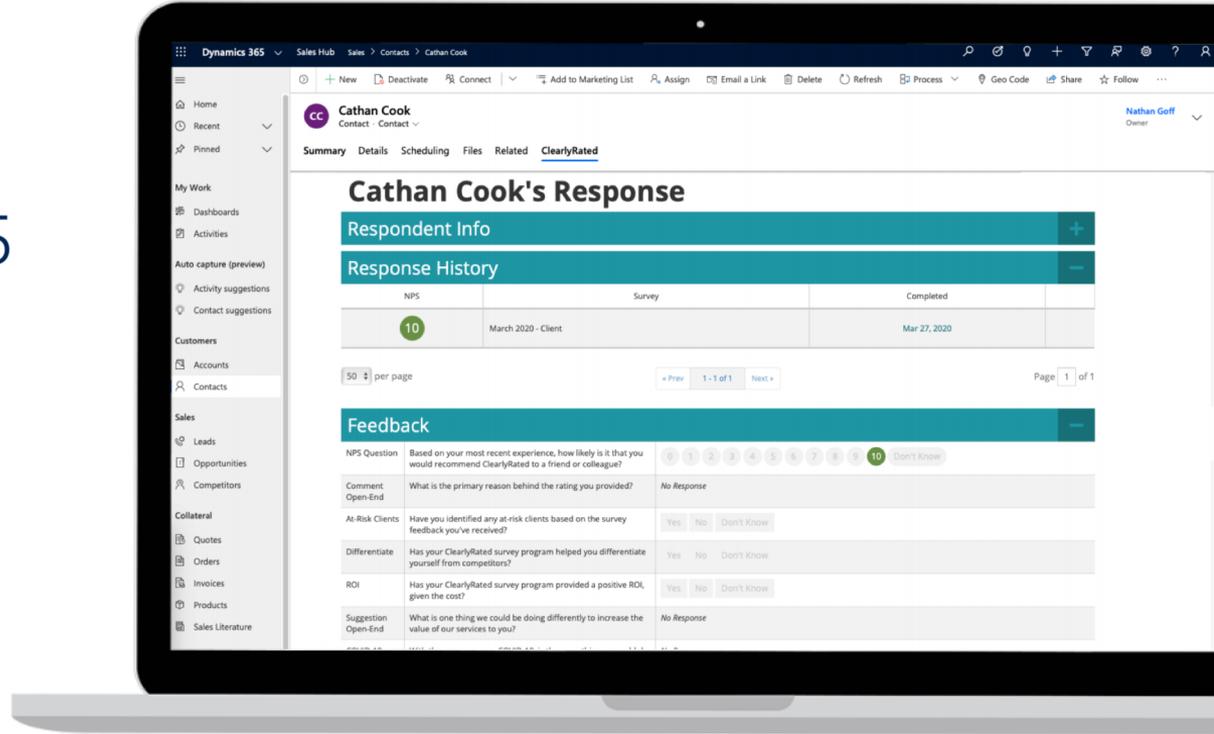
Efficient  
Scalable



# Best Practice #5: Leverage technology to scale ROI



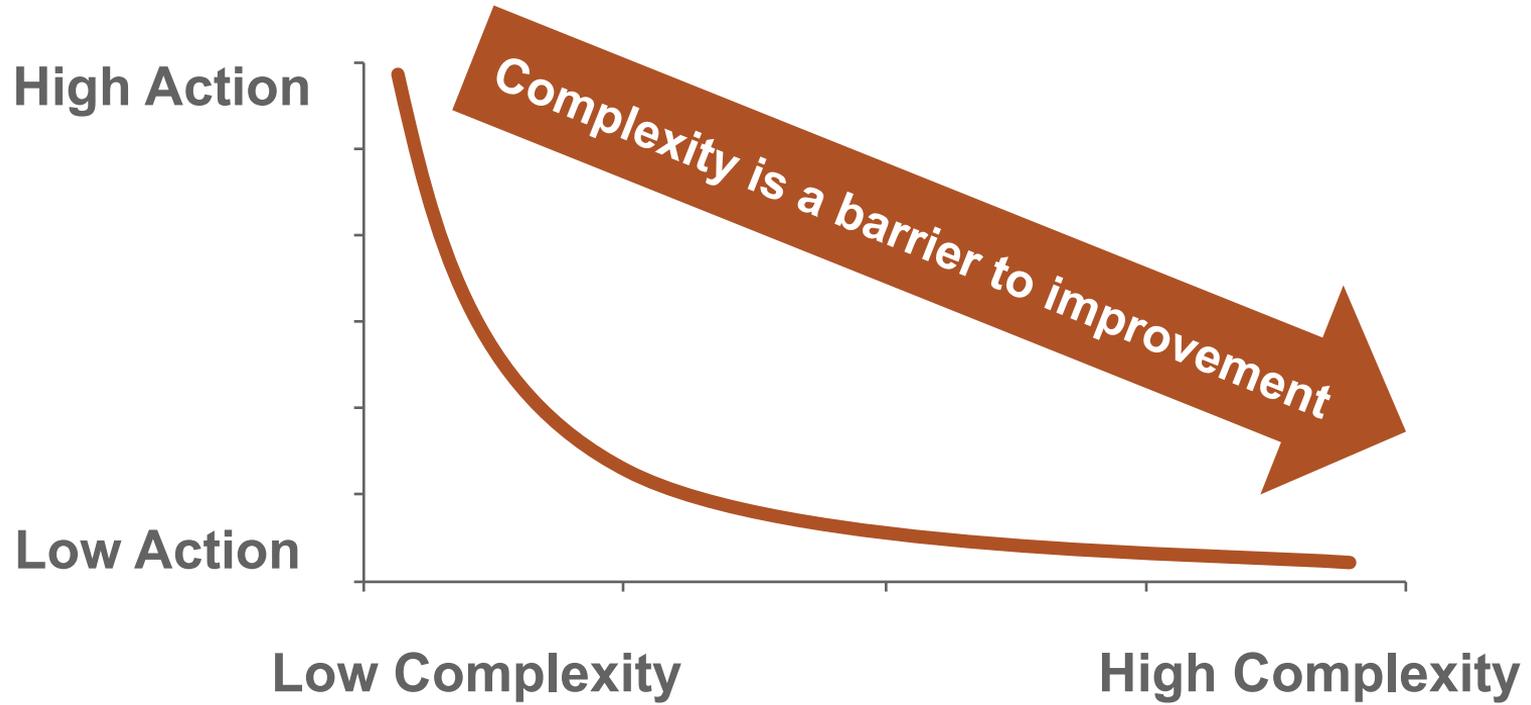
# Best Practice #5: Leverage technology to scale ROI





# Common Missteps to Avoid

# Misstep #1: Overcomplicating the initiative



# Misstep #1: Overcomplicating the initiative

80



80% of your time should be spent responding to and taking action on feedback.

/

20



20% of your time should be spent on designing and implementing a survey.

# Example survey:

Ask the questions that will be most valuable and actionable to your team.



Mostly multiple choice

## Satisfaction Survey

Based on your most recent experience, how likely is it that you would recommend Your Brand to a friend or colleague?

Not at all likely Extremely likely

0  1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10  Don't Know

My phone calls and emails are \_\_\_\_\_ returned within 24 hours.

- Always  
 Sometimes  
 Never

Your Brand \_\_\_\_\_ delivers high quality, error-free work.

- Always  
 Sometimes  
 Never

The firm's services are \_\_\_\_\_ a good value, given the cost.

- Always  
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 Never

Your Brand \_\_\_\_\_ has a thorough understanding of my needs.

- Always  
 Sometimes  
 Never

Your Brand is \_\_\_\_\_ proactive in their approach to helping me.

- Always  
 Sometimes  
 Never

What is the primary reason behind the rating you provided?

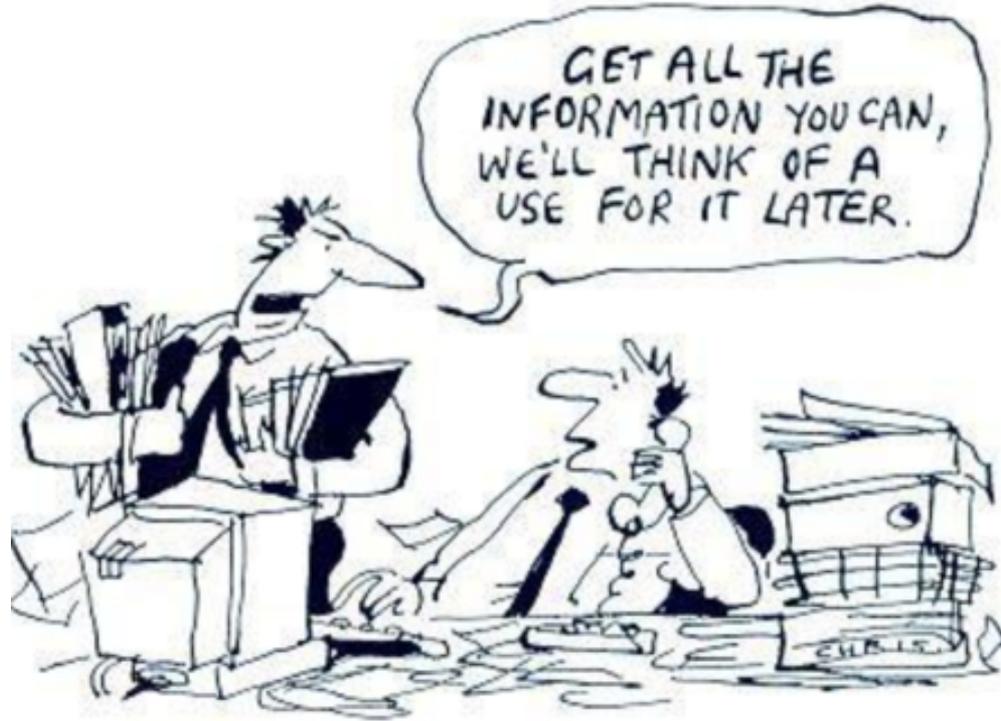
What is one thing we could be doing differently to increase the value you receive from us?

No more than 10 questions

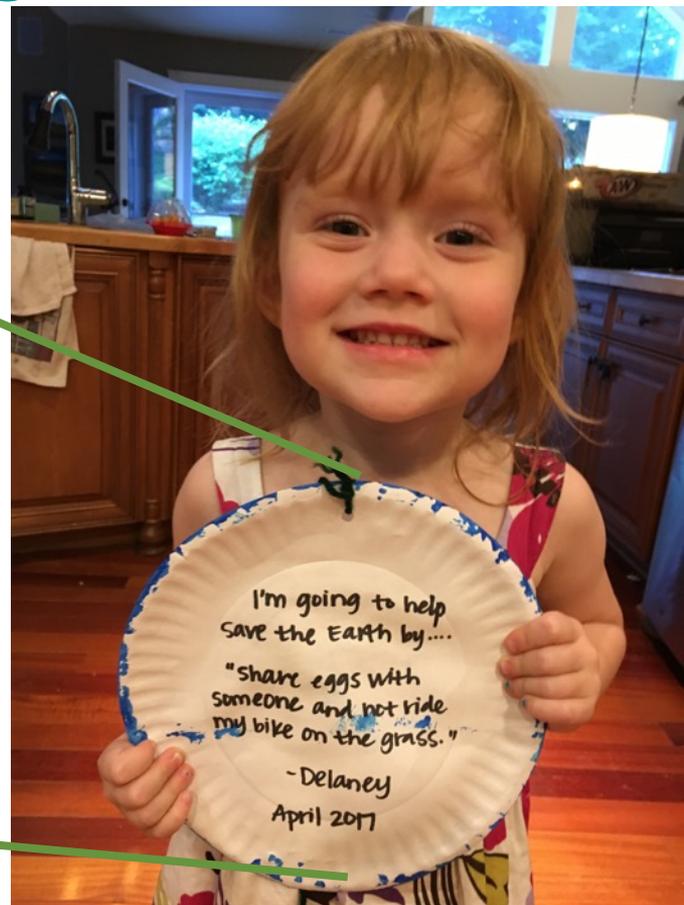
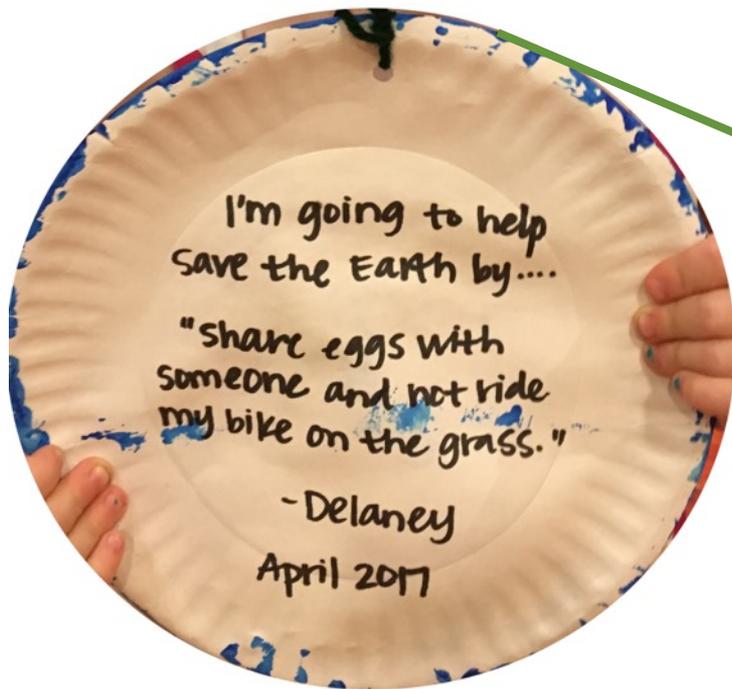
*“When we conducted the survey ourselves, we asked too many questions, and the end result was reams of Excel spreadsheets that supplied little to no actionable information. Despite our best intentions and efforts, it ultimately felt like a survey for the sake of doing a survey.”*

**– Jack Kolmansberger**  
CMO, Herbein + Co

# Misstep #1: Overcomplicating the initiative



# Misstep #1: Overcomplicating the initiative

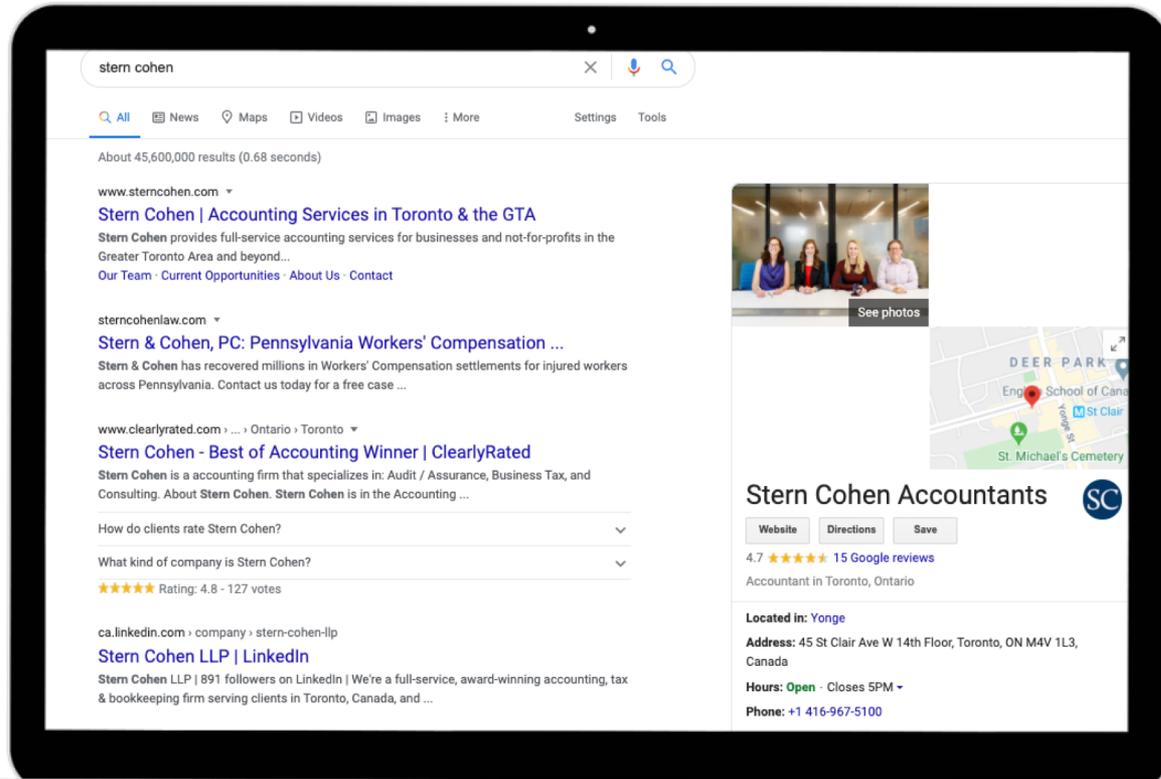


# Misstep #2: Settling for a low response rate

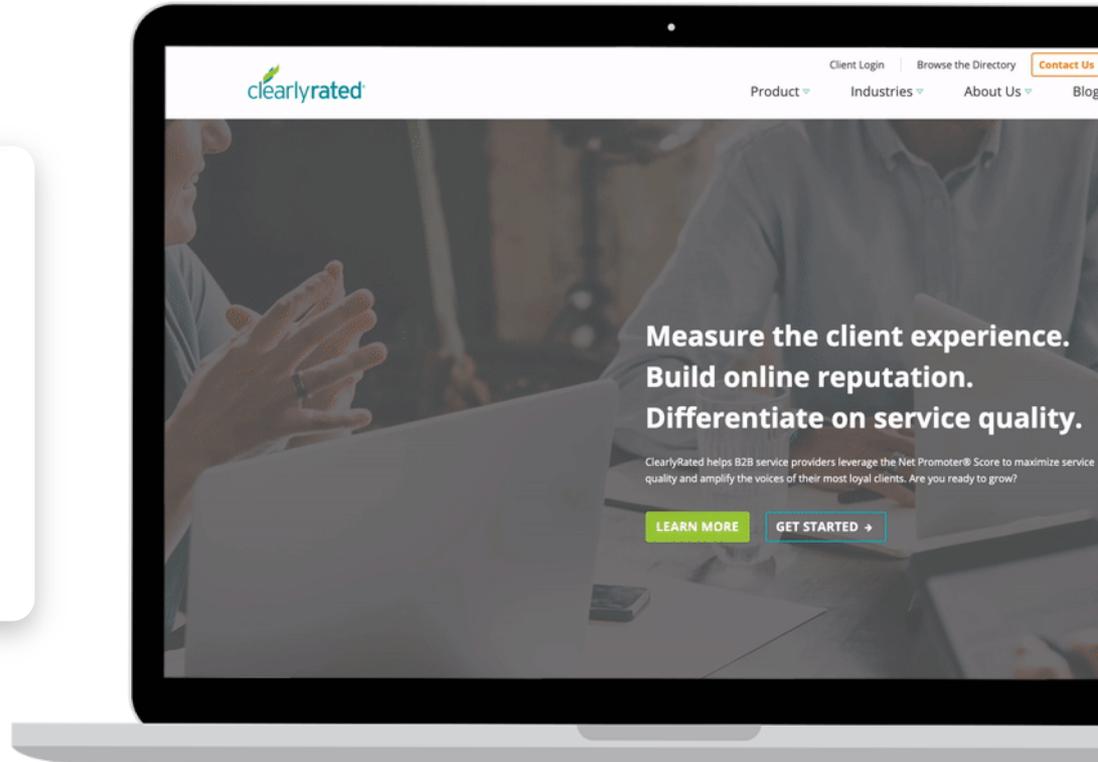
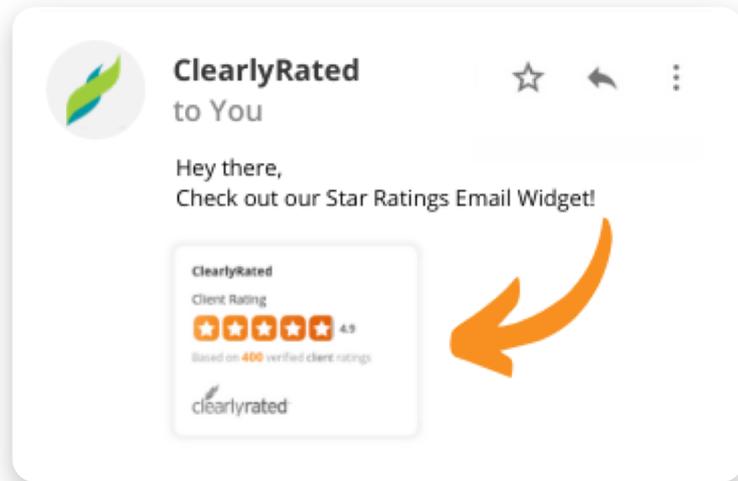
- Ways to increase your response rate:
  1. Personalized email
  2. Lose the HTML
  3. Email signed by individual
  4. Embedded NPS question
  5. Strong server rating
  6. Mobile-optimized (and easy)
  7. # of questions in subject line
  8. Communicate early & often
  9. Close the loop
  10. Push for internal follow-up
  11. (at least) 1 reminder email



# Misstep #3: Not capitalizing on positive feedback – Online Reputations



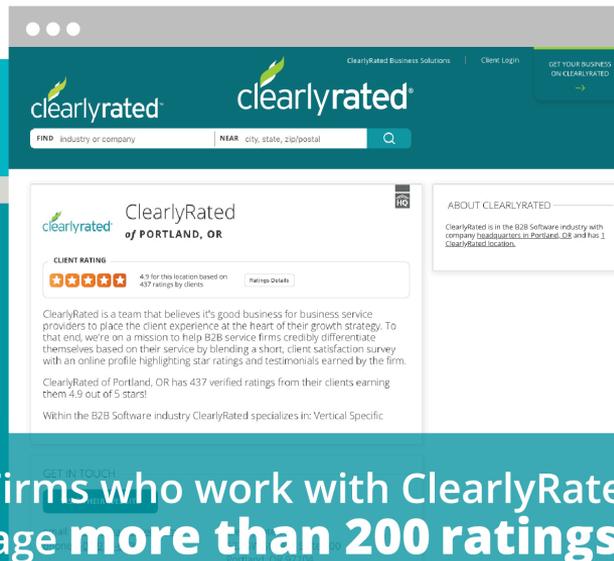
# Misstep #3: Not capitalizing on positive feedback – Star Ratings



# Top 100 Largest Accounting Firms



Firms average **less than 5 reviews** on sites such as Google & Yelp

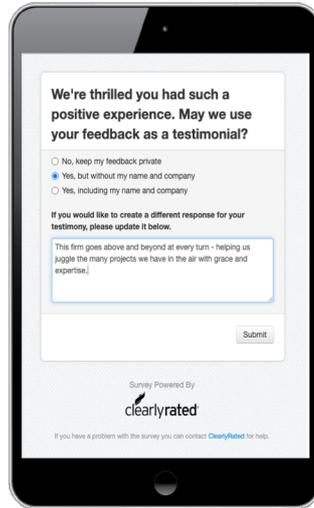


Firms who work with ClearlyRated average **more than 200 ratings** from their clients on ClearlyRated.com

*source: Analysis of 100 largest accounting firms in the U.S.*

# Misstep #3: Not capitalizing on positive feedback – Testimonials

The average accounting firm who surveys their clients with ClearlyRated generates nearly **200** client-approved testimonials



We're thrilled you had such a positive experience. May we use your feedback as a testimonial?

No, keep my feedback private  
 Yes, but without my name and company  
 Yes, including my name and company

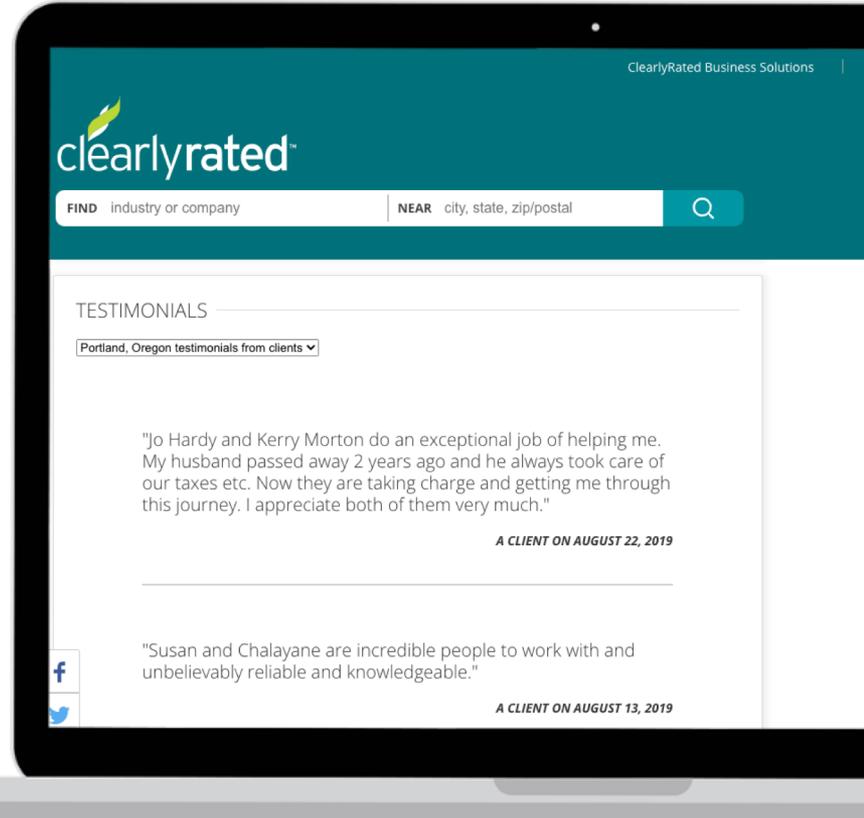
If you would like to create a different response for your testimony, please update it below.

This firm goes above and beyond at every turn - helping us juggle the many projects we have in the air with grace and expertise.

Submit

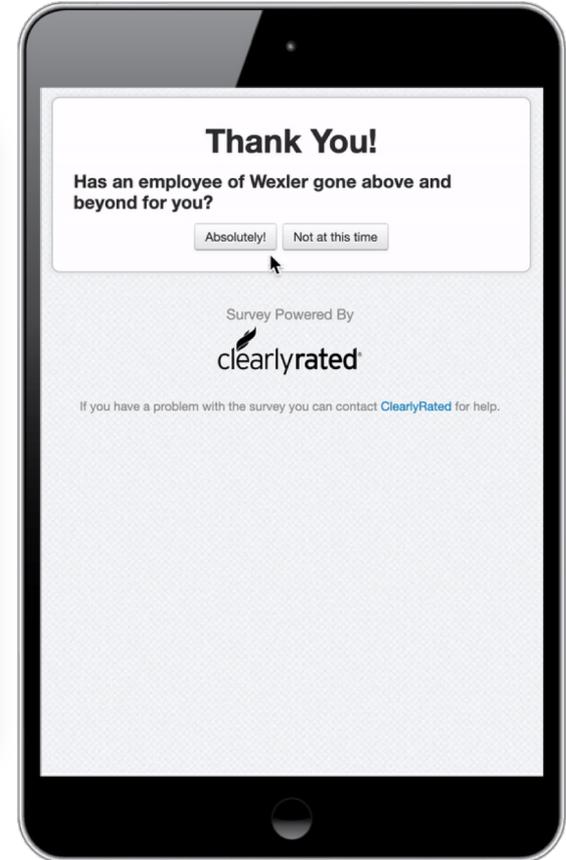
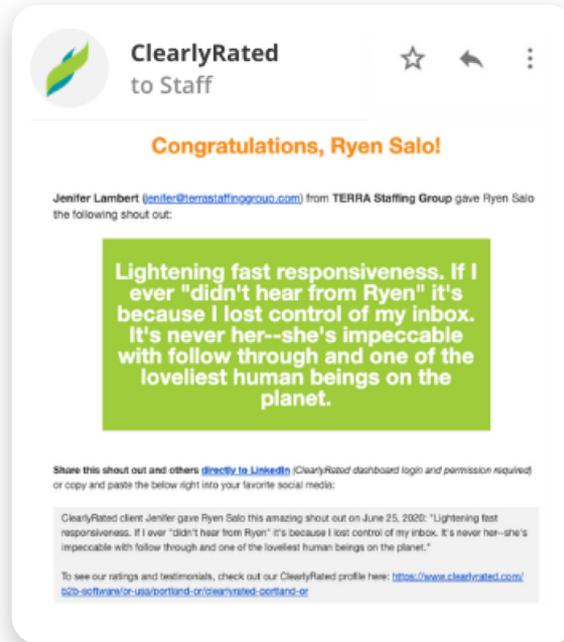
Survey Powered By  
clearlyrated

If you have a problem with the survey you can contact [ClearlyRated](#) for help.



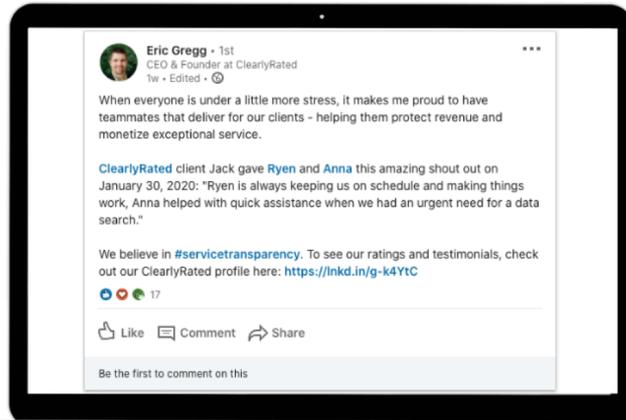
# Misstep #3: Not capitalizing on positive feedback – Shout Outs

On average, roughly **40%** of Promoters will elect to leave a Shout Out

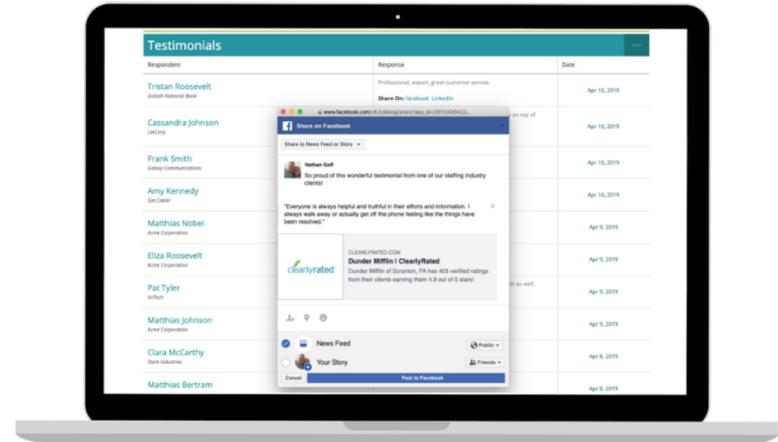


# Misstep #3: Not capitalizing on positive feedback – Social Sharing

## LinkedIn



## facebook



## Comments from marketing and BD leaders about the power of positive feedback:



Jack M. Kolmansberger  
Chief Marketing Officer

“*Our ability to share positive client feedback internally helps us to culturally reinforce our commitment to client service while providing clear examples of the types of behaviors that create a world-class client experience. It’s one of the many ways that we’re leveraging our NPS survey program for continuous improvement. We want to be the firm that’s looking ahead, not backward.*”

– Jack Kolmansberger

## Comments from marketing and BD leaders about the power of positive feedback:



Dave Sullivan  
Shareholder & Director of  
Business Development  
Perkins & Co

“Hearing from our happy clients and seeing glowing feedback from key accounts was an incredibly powerful experience! We have learned how to harness this positive feedback as a touchstone to rally our team around our commitment to the client experience and to reinforce our culture of service excellence throughout the firm.”

– Dave Sullivan

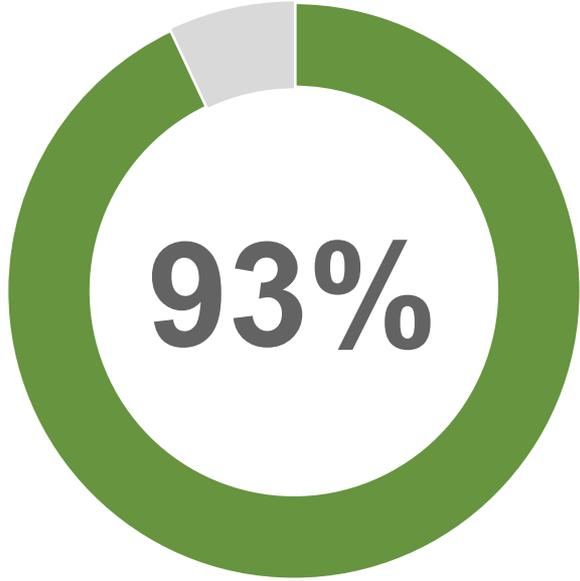
# Comments from marketing and BD leaders about the power of positive feedback:



Jennifer Centro  
Director of Marketing &  
Sustainability  
Sensiba San Filippo

“*The ClearlyRated survey process is so easy, and the results are well worth the price. While it is a nice differentiator for us, it is also a massive morale boost to our employees during our busiest time of year.*”

– Jennifer Cantero



93% of our accounting firm clients say their ClearlyRated survey program helps them differentiate in the marketplace.

# It's hard to differentiate on service without proof



*"BDO brings world-class resources and exceptional service to each and every one of our clients."*



*"At RSM, our client-centric approach is grounded in our strong industry perspective and desire to deliver unparalleled client experiences."*



*"From our origins in 1919, an innovative and client-centric culture has flourished at CohnReznick."*



*"BKD's mission is to always strive for excellence in providing services to clients, create rewarding career opportunities and maintain sound professional, business and financial standards."*



*"We are committed to providing the most efficient and expeditious services, while always maintaining the highest ethical standards."*

## Parting Thought

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*More legacies will be defined in 2020 than in the past decade combined.*

# BE A HERO

# Questions?



**Eric Gregg**

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[linkedin.com/in/ericgregg/](https://www.linkedin.com/in/ericgregg/)