



Marketing and Business Development in Volatile Times: 5 Ways Law Firms Can Reduce Stress for Buyers

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We are living in a new reality...



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Impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic are rippling through our economy.

A high-risk decision has become even more stressful for your buyers.

Much of this data was gathered prior to the pandemic.

We are offering advice that would be important in the best of times, but that we expect will become critical as we navigate our new normal.

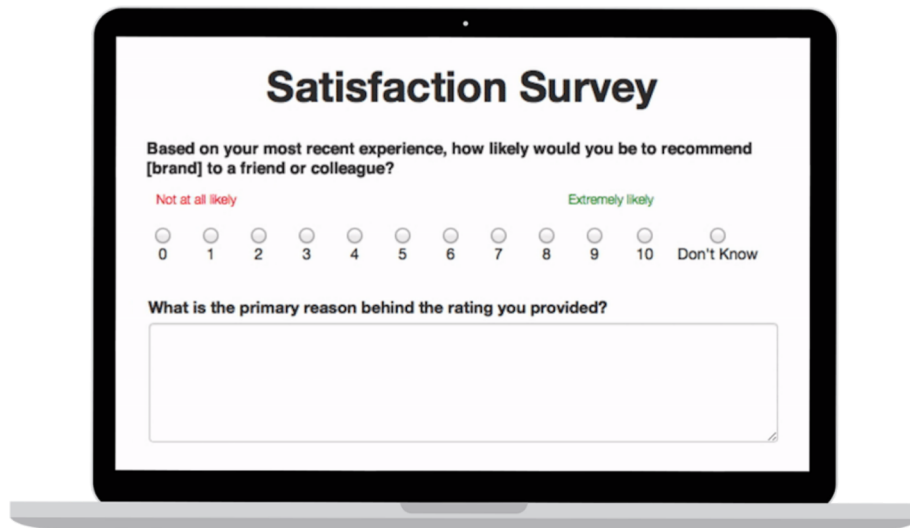
About ClearlyRated



Est. 2003

Focus on professional service
providers since 2007

We help law firms: identify at-risk
revenue, retain key accounts,
build a business model that
centers the client experience.



Measure the client experience.
Build online reputation.
Differentiate on service quality.

ClearlyRated Market Research (aka *bonus!*)

#1: 2020 Legal Buyer and Client Satisfaction Study – a “BC” project

Surveyed:

414 corporate buyers and clients of legal services

We asked:

- How clients rate their experience with their primary firm.
- What drives satisfaction with the service experience, and what drives willingness to refer.
- Which resources buyers prioritize when navigating and vetting prospective firms to work with.
- How firm reputation and the client experience influence the buyer journey and opportunities for growth.

ClearlyRated Market Research (aka *bonus!*)

#2: Professional Services Outlook Index – an “AC” project

A monthly survey launched April 2020; invites accounting and law firm employees to share their perspective on:

- Business outlook compared to 1 month ago.
- Expectations for business outlook 1 month from now, and 6 months from now.
- Strategic focus areas:
 - Cutting costs vs. investing for growth?
 - Retaining accounts vs. expanding accounts vs. acquiring new clients?

Would you like to participate in the May index?

Please drop me a line: kat.kocurek@clearlyrated.com

Current business sentiment as reported by law firm professionals...

Legal Industry - Business Outlook Report

Reporting Date: April 21, 2020

Business Outlook Index



Current business sentiment as reported by law firm professionals...

Strategic Focus

Cutting
Costs
69%

▲ +22



Investing
for Growth
31%

▼ -22

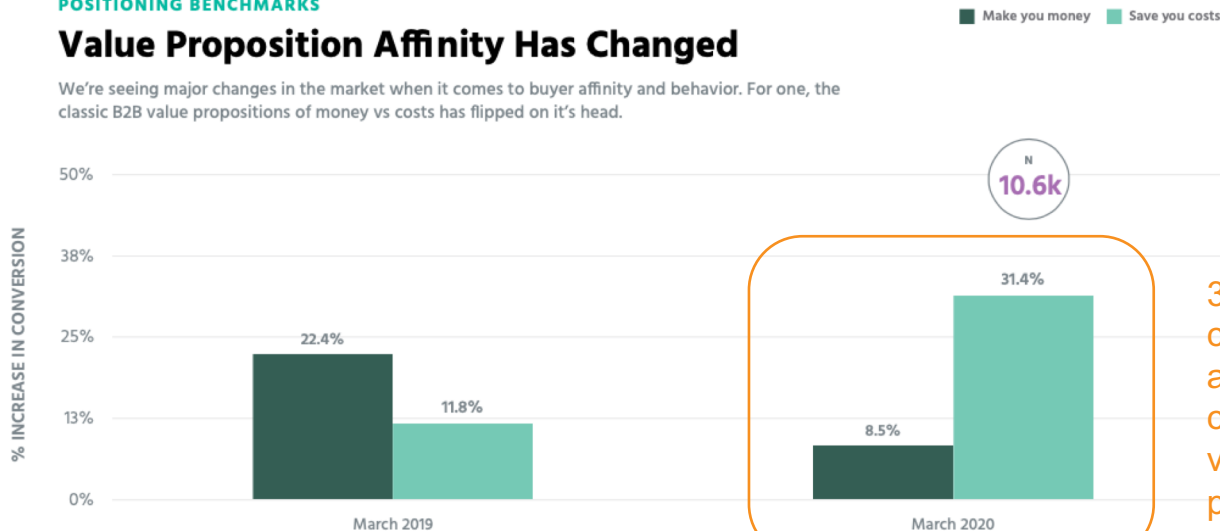
SOURCE: ClearlyRated 2020

The same is true across industries (and with your buyers)...

POSITIONING BENCHMARKS

Value Proposition Affinity Has Changed

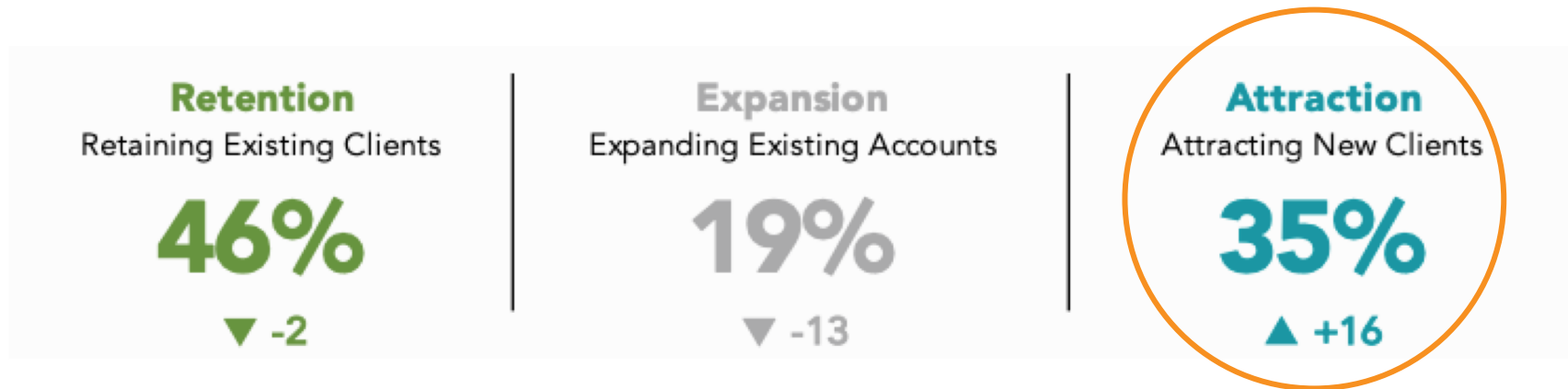
We're seeing major changes in the market when it comes to buyer affinity and behavior. For one, the classic B2B value propositions of money vs costs has flipped on it's head.



3x more conversions associated with cost-savings value propositions

N = Minimum of 3k buyers per segment pulled from the middle 2/3 of data. This, along with a dampening model was used to control for outlier spikes.

Current business sentiment as reported by law firm professionals...



SOURCE: ClearlyRated 2020



What the data tells us about buyers' perception of stress and risk

Let's turn to the research...

Gartner®

FORRESTER®



**Harvard
Business
Review**

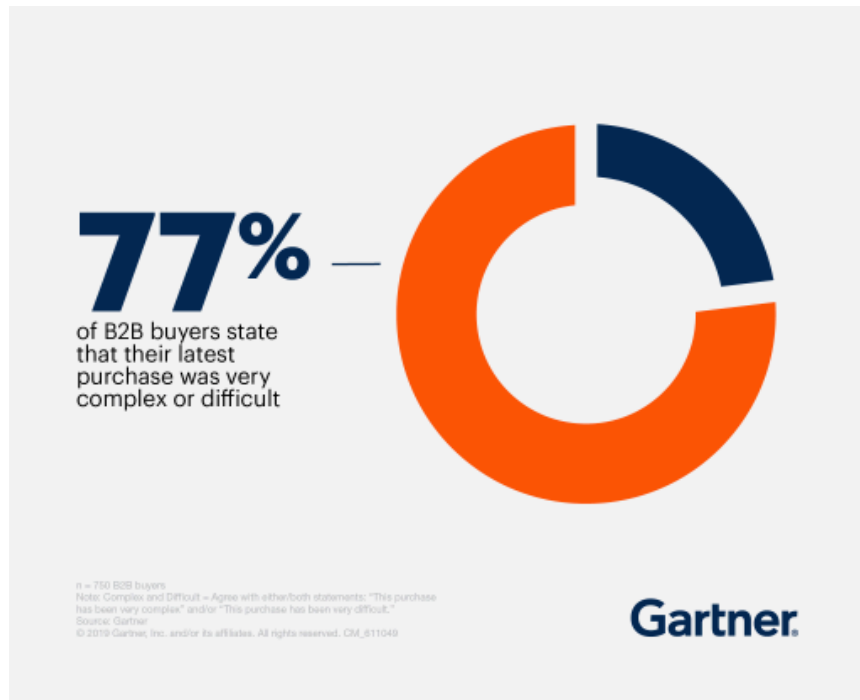
 **clearlyrated**®

DEMAND  **GEN**®
REPORT

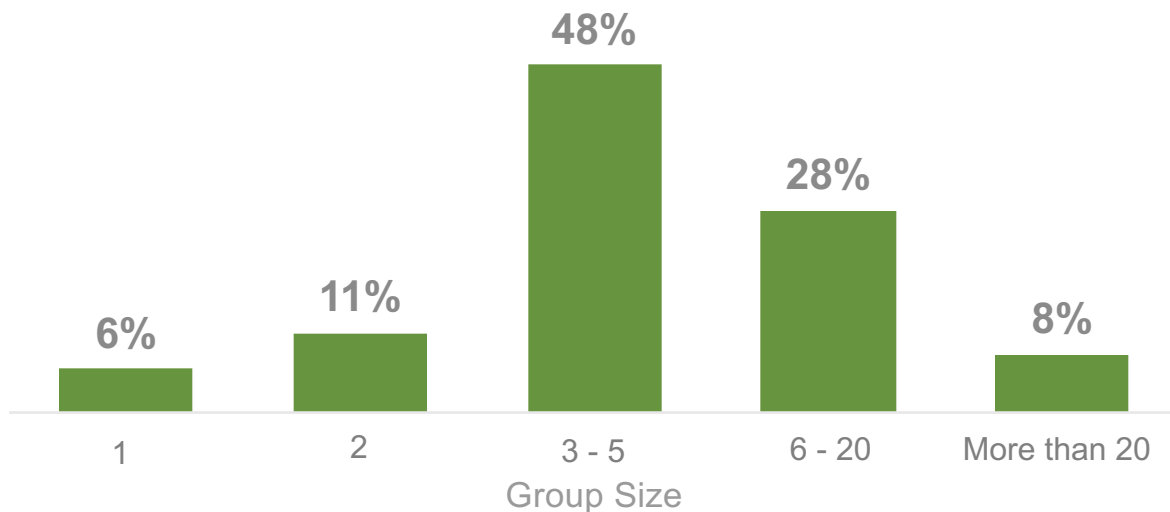
 **ProfitWell**

 **clearlyrated**®

Buyers are facing a challenging and complex landscape.



Decision-making groups are getting larger.



Mean: 7.7

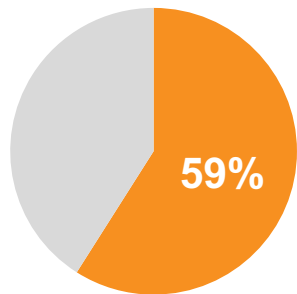
Median: 5

84% of purchase decisions are made in groups of 3 or more.

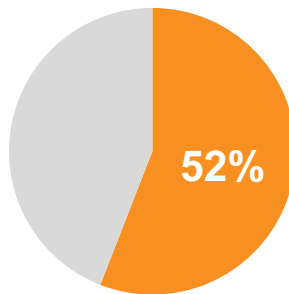
SOURCE: ClearlyRated 2020

This is true across B2B purchase decisions.

Of 283 C-level executives VPs and Directors across B2B industries:



59% say they now have formal buying groups or buying committees in place to review purchases

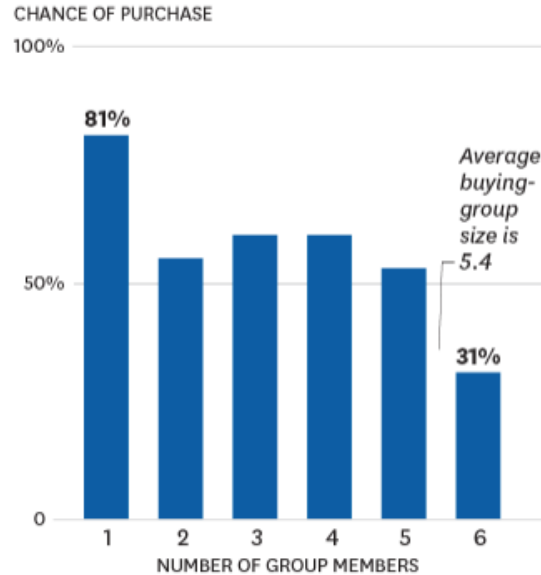


52% say the number of buying group members increase significantly

SOURCE: B2B Buyer Survey from DemandGen

As group size increases, so does aversion to risk.

The likelihood of a purchase drops sharply as the number of decision makers increases.



Risk-averse buyers are *researchers*.

Today's business buyers are increasingly self-directed:

60% prefer not to interact with a sales rep as the primary source of information.



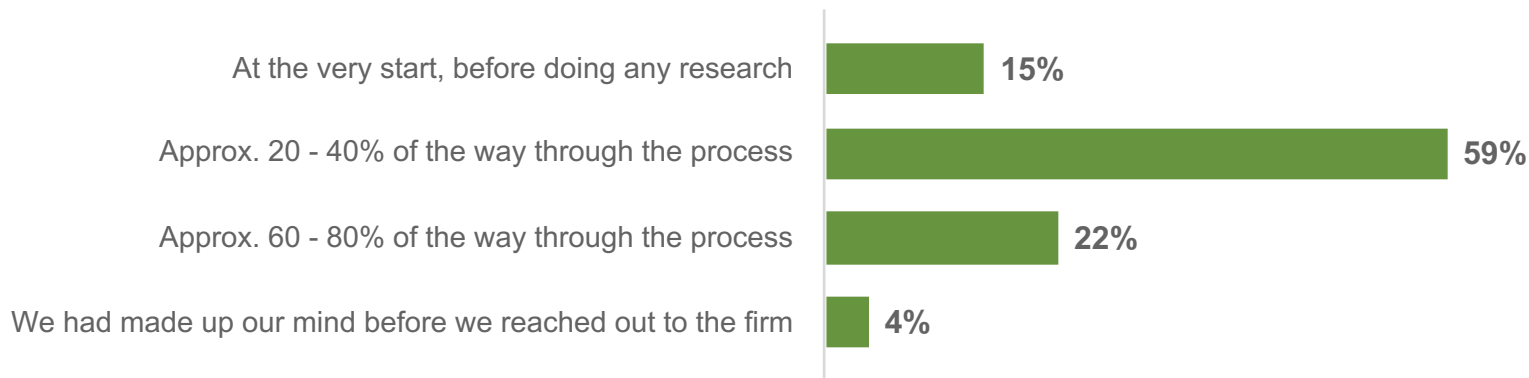
62% say they can now develop selection criteria or finalize a vendor list — based solely on digital content.

68% prefer to research on their own, online.

SOURCE: Forrester

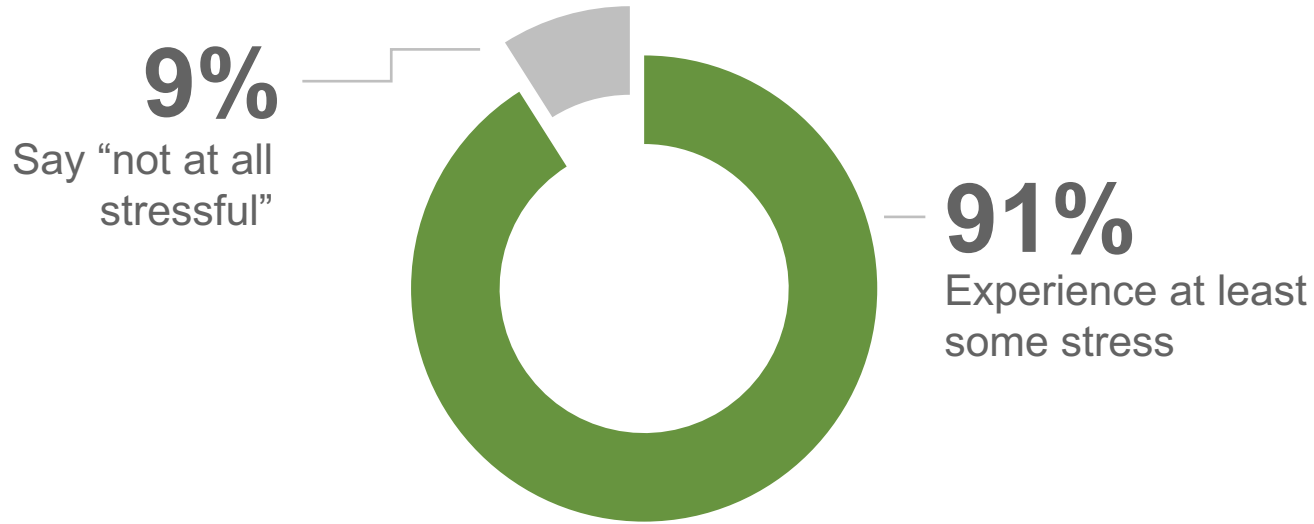
Risk-averse buyers are *researchers*.

When selecting your primary law firm, how far would you estimate you were in the process before you directly engaged with people from that firm?



SOURCE: ClearlyRated 2020

Most law firm prospects experience stress when making a purchase decision.



Causes of Prospects' Stress





So what can we do?

5 Strategies to Mitigate Stress for your Buyers

5 strategies to mitigate stress for prospects

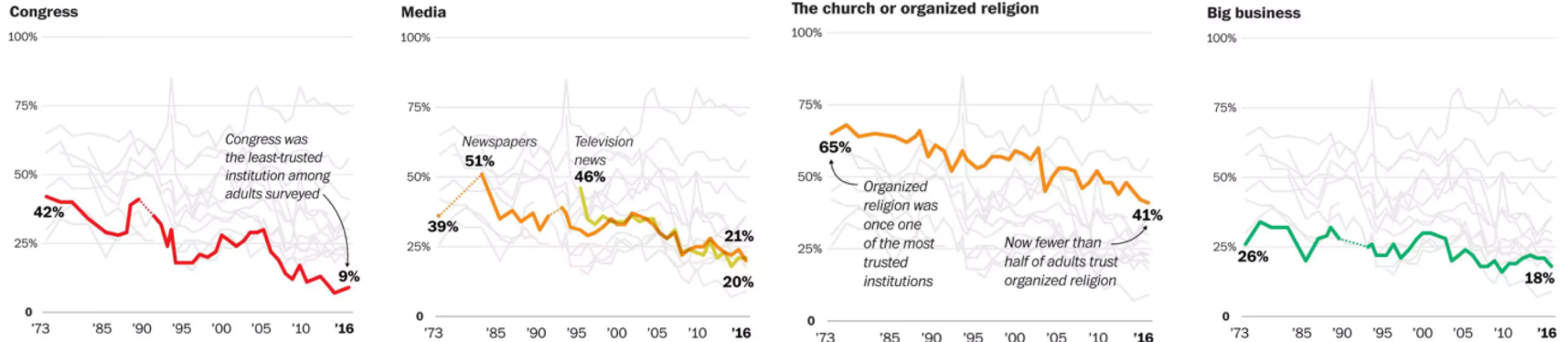
1. Build trust.
2. Re-define your role as a trusted advisor.
3. Understand your reputation.
4. De-risk your prospect's decision.
5. Be a human.

5 strategies to mitigate stress for prospects

1. **Build trust.**
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1) Build trust with your prospects.

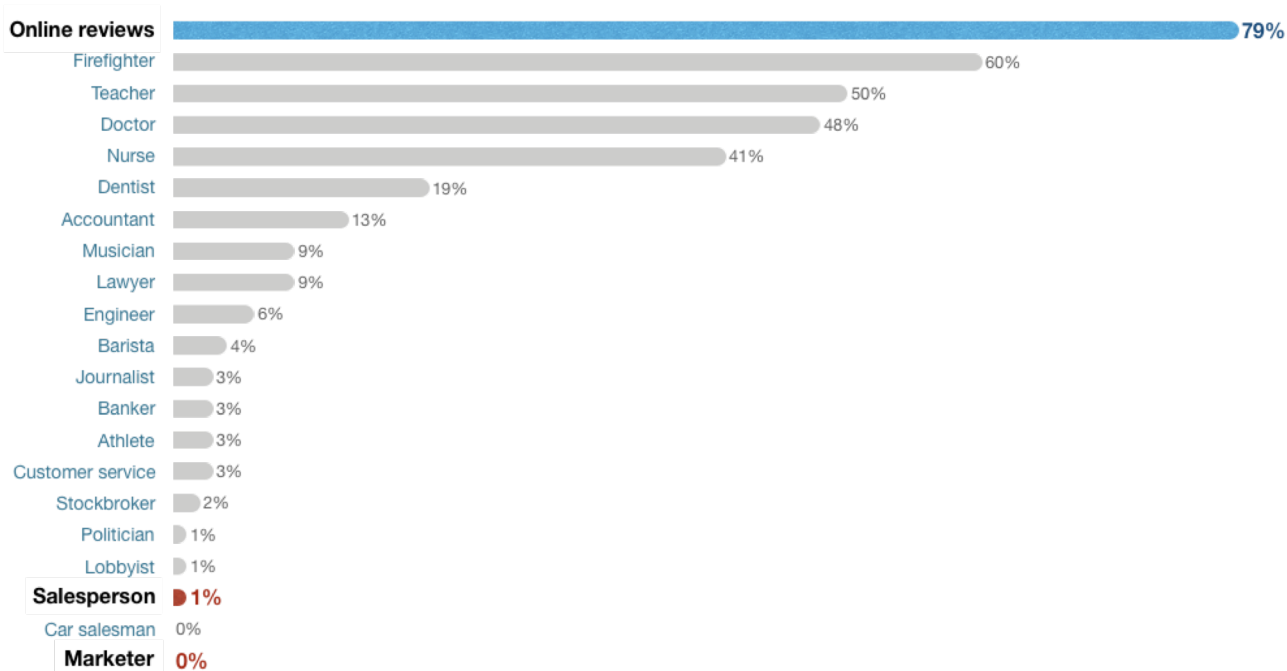
Cultural Context: Even before COVID-19, institutional trust was at historically low levels.



SOURCE: Gallup Organization

1) Build trust with your prospects.

Marketing/BD Context: Buyers don't trust us. Like, at all.



1) Build trust with your prospects.

Ideas for building trust with prospects:

- Be empathetic and compassionate to how difficult their journey is, especially in light of everything that's going on.
- Treat the buying process like the start of the client experience. Ensure you have service standards embedded within your process of working with buyers so they understand and can map the type of experience they can expect to have with your firm.
- Educate with resources and a bird's eye view of how COVID-19 can (and should) impact their decision-making process.
- Demonstrate your knowledge of their journey, and offer insights to help them navigate their own purchase decision. I.e. take a “prescriptive” approach to business development.

A prescriptive approach to BD looks like:

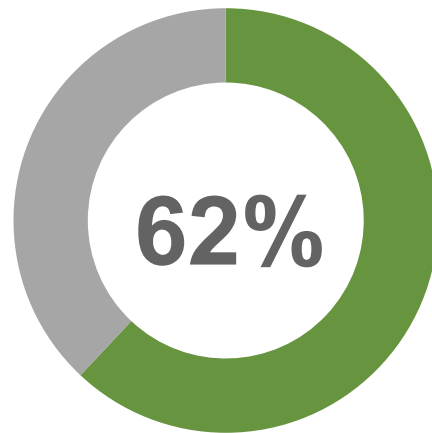
- Providing a clear recommendation for action backed by a specific rationale;
- Presenting a concise offering and a stable view of your capabilities;
- Explaining complex aspects of the purchase process clearly.

“One of the things we’ve learned from working with businesses like yours is that info-security folks are going to get involved, often it happens late in the process. When they come in late, things tend to stall and complexity increases; so you’ll want to bring them in earlier. When you do that, they will have two main questions: X and Y. Here’s how we can answer them.”

Outcomes of a prescriptive approach to BD

Prospects perceive prescriptive sales people as being one step ahead, anticipating and eliminating obstacles.

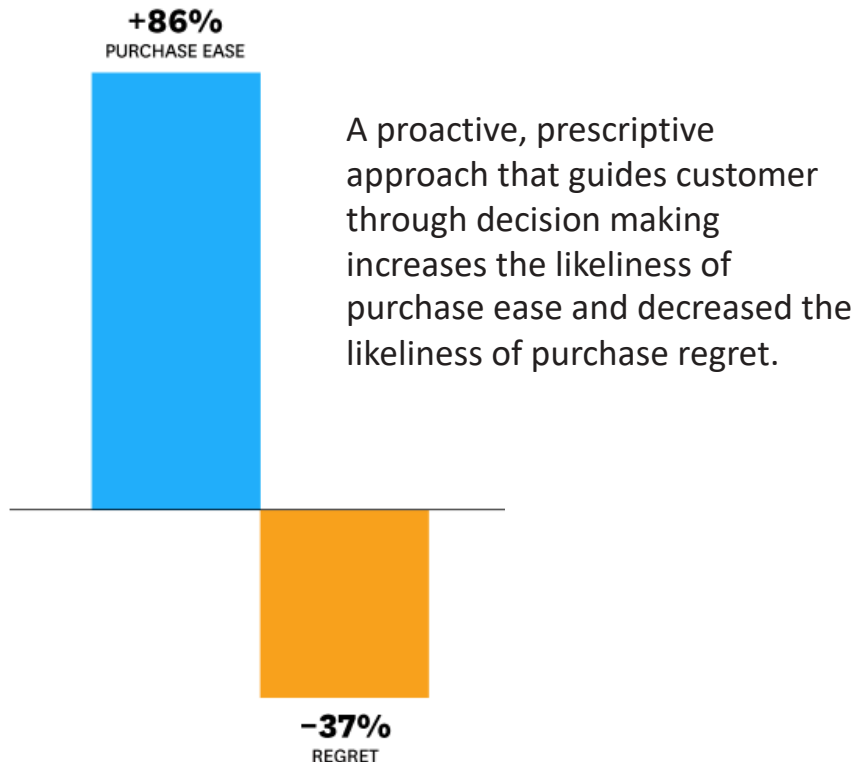
In fact, purchase ease is by far the biggest driver of deal quality across three large studies. What's more, prospects who are engaged in a prescriptive, "easy" sales process are dramatically less likely to regret their purchase or to speak negatively of the supplier, and are more likely to repurchase, than clients in conventional sales interactions.



B2B suppliers that make buying easy are 62% more likely to win a high-quality sale (one in which the prospect buys a premium offering).

Outcomes of a prescriptive approach to BD

CUSTOMERS REPORTED



5 strategies to mitigate stress for prospects

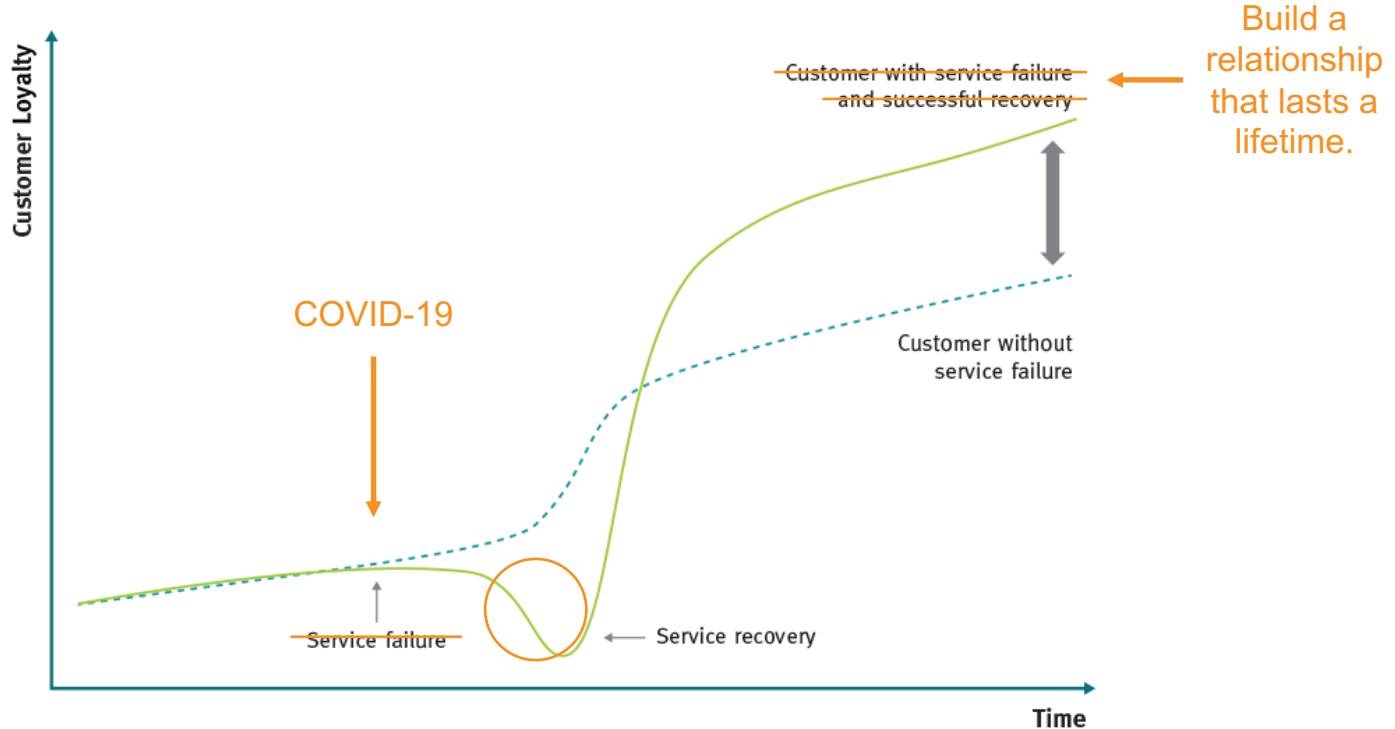
1. Build trust.
2. **Re-define your role as a trusted advisor.**
3. Understand your reputation.
4. De-risk your prospect's decision.
5. Be a human.

2) Re-define your role as a trusted advisor.

Uncertainty is rampant right now. Use your knowledge, expertise, and understanding of prospects' needs to give sound advice in a time when it's needed most.

2) Re-define your role as a trusted advisor.

Service Recovery Paradox



5 strategies to mitigate stress for prospects

1. Build trust.
2. Re-define your role as a trusted advisor.
3. **Understand your reputation (and leverage it).**
4. De-risk your prospect's decision.
5. Be a human.

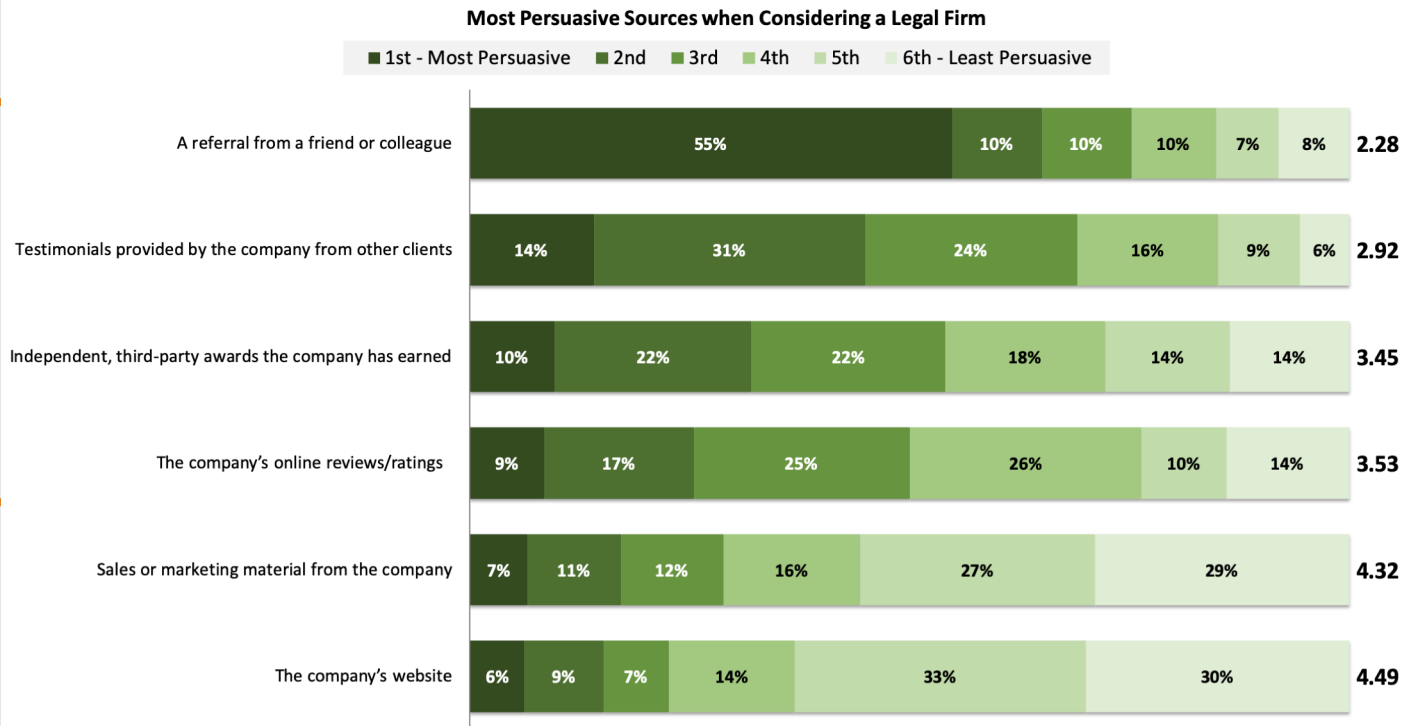
3) Understand your reputation.

Let's level-set on what we mean by “reputation”

- Your reputation lives a very real existence apart from you, representing the collective mental construct everyone *but* you shares *about* you, a construct based partially on your own actions but also on the perceptions others have about *others'* perceptions of your actions.
 - Translation – you don't get to decide your reputation. Others do. And you won't know until you ask.

3) Understand your reputation.

What others have to say about working with your firm.



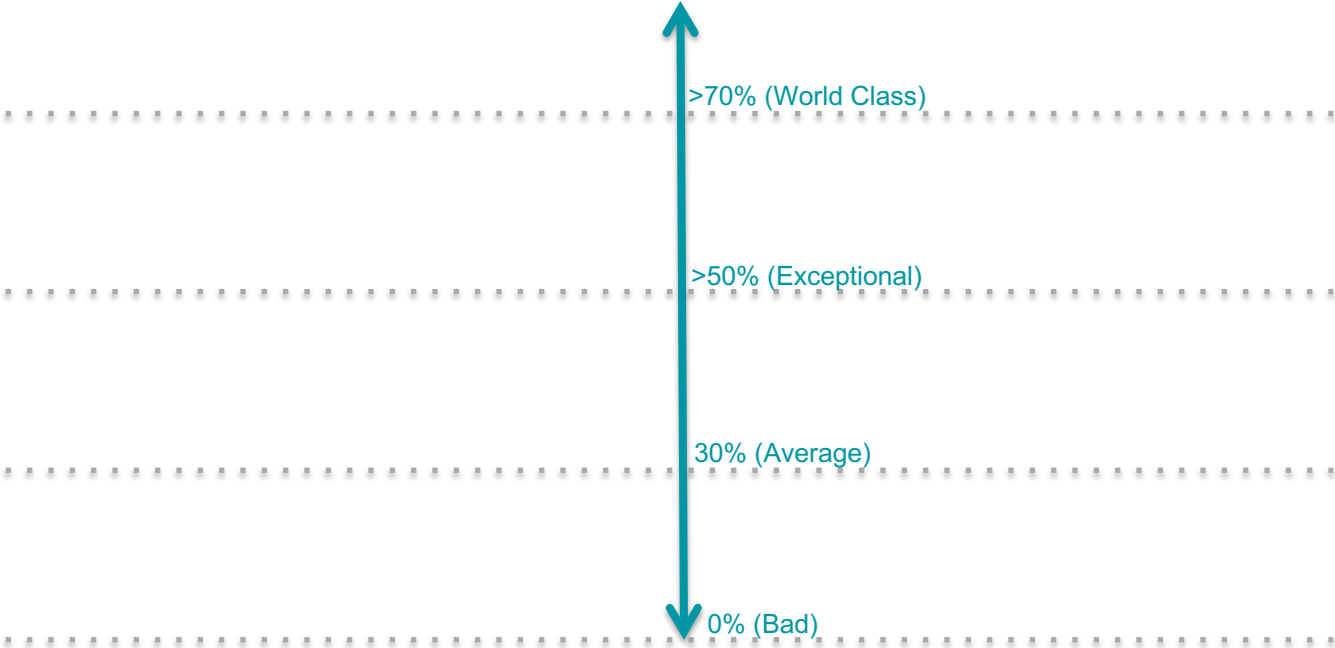
3) Understand your reputation... with the Net Promoter® Score.

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

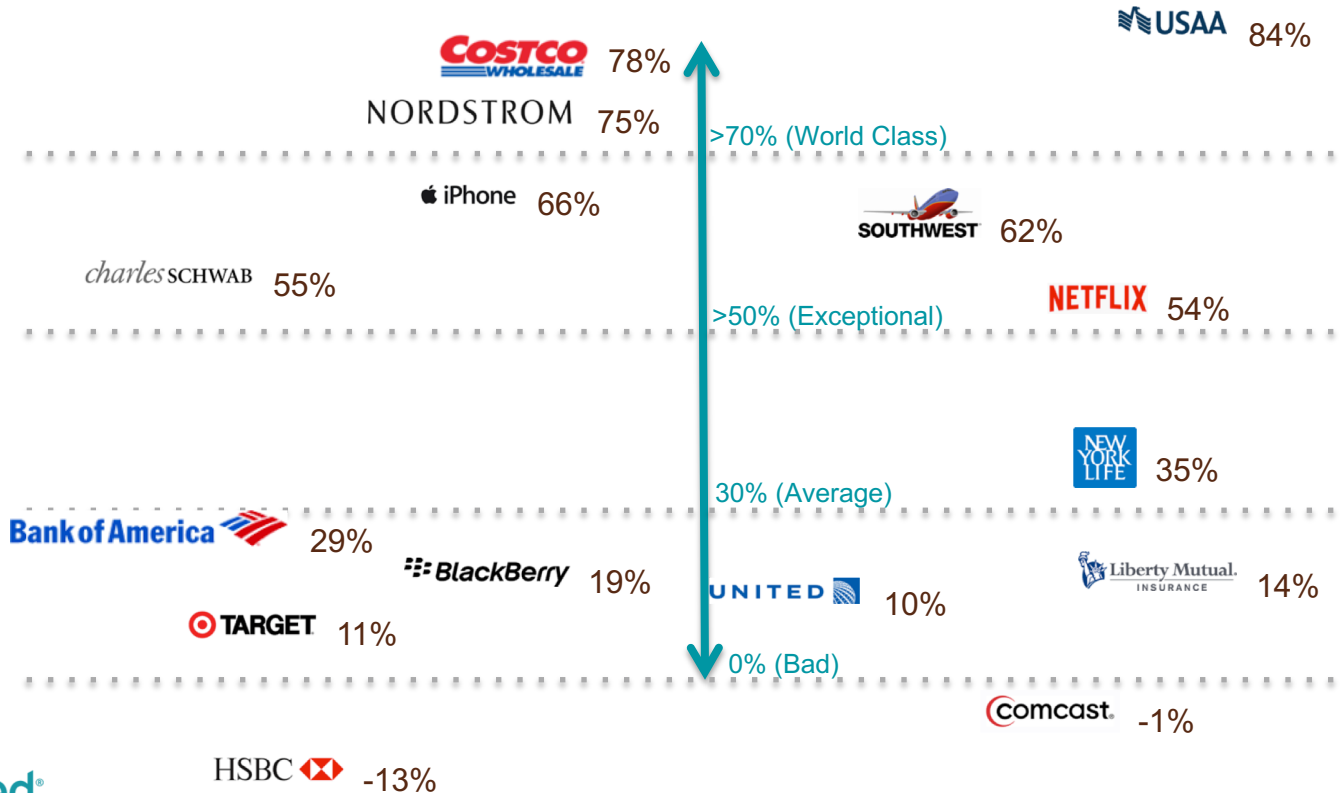


$$\text{Net Promoter® Score} = \% \text{ Promoters} - \% \text{ Detractors}$$

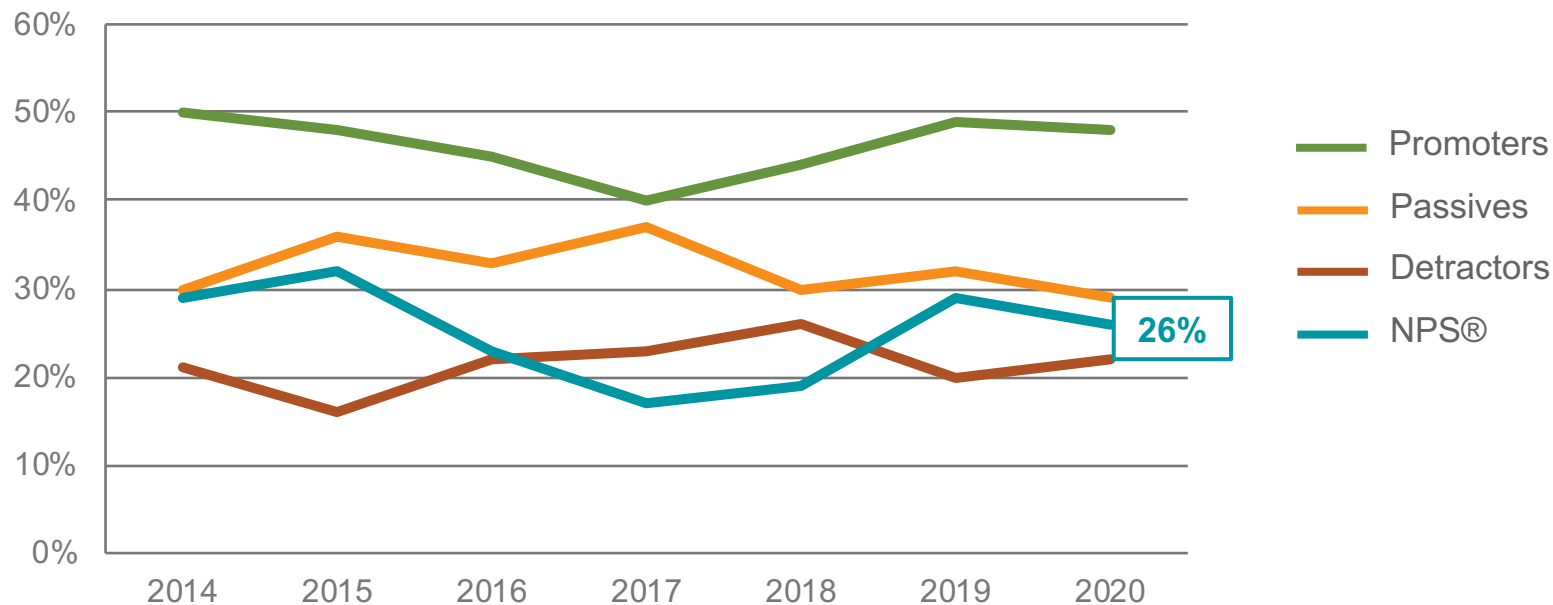
Global NPS Standards



NPS Across Industries



Legal Industry NPS® Benchmark



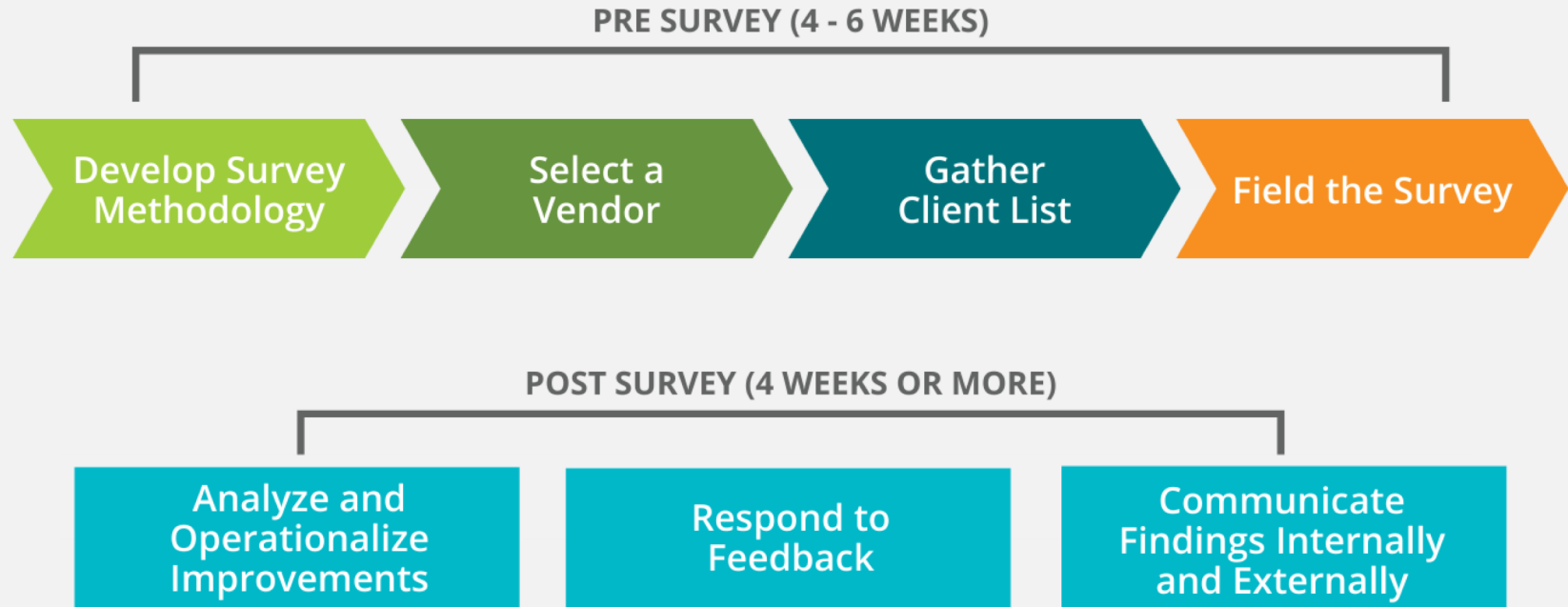
SOURCE: ClearlyRated 2020

Thoughts on surveying clients in the time of COVID-19:

Thoughts on surveying clients in the time of COVID-19:

- Client churn is likely to increase, even as the economic climate improves.
- Economic uncertainty drives risk-aversion, making social proof more important than ever.
- Your team deserves some good news to celebrate.
- Are your clients facing major crisis? Be sensitive to whether right this moment is an appropriate time to survey.
- Start planning well ahead of your survey program launch date.
 - The second that people can stop worrying about triaging their business and start worrying about their future path forward with their business, you want to be confirming that you're part of the path forward.
 - If you start thinking about a survey at the time you need to survey, you're actually 4-6 weeks behind.

Average Survey Launch Timeline



5 strategies to mitigate stress for prospects

1. Understand your reputation.
2. Build trust.
3. Re-define your role as a trusted advisor.
4. **De-risk your prospect's decision.**
5. Be a human.

4) De-risk your prospect's decision.

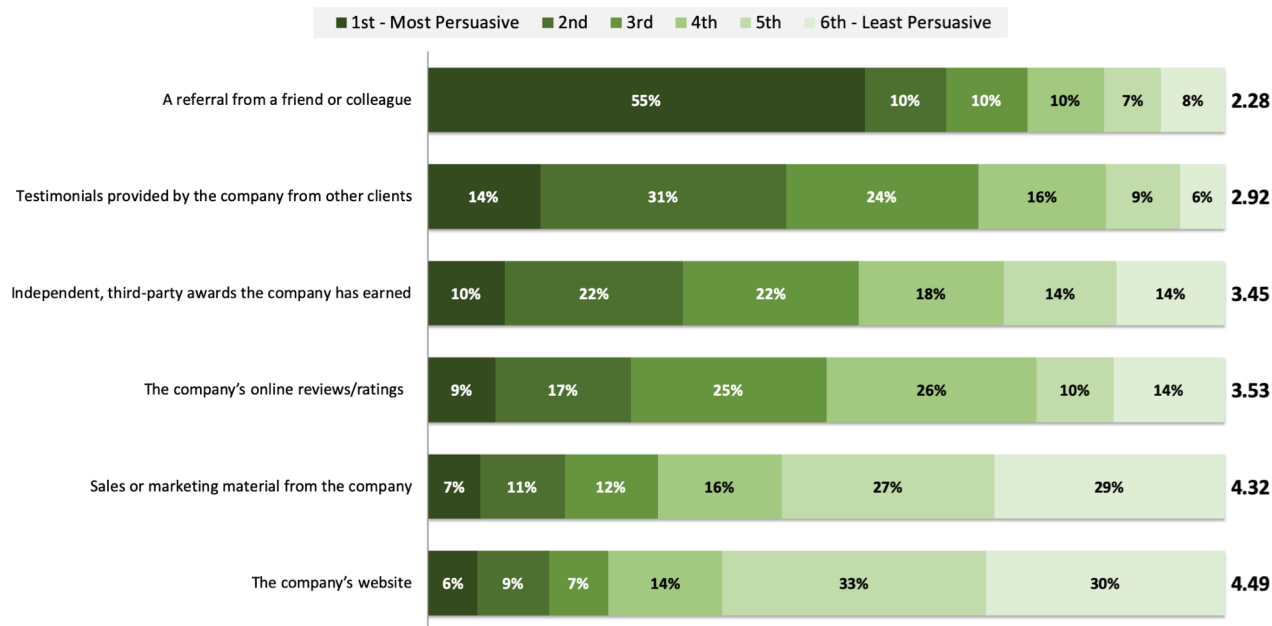


Causes of Prospects' Stress



4) De-risk your prospect's decision.

Most Persuasive Sources when Considering a Legal Firm



SOURCE: ClearlyRated 2020

Offer Promoters as references

Gather and publish testimonials from Promoters

Develop an award-strategy that hits on buyers' desire for service proof

Invite Promoters to leave you a review online

Build all of these proof points from your client experience into your marketing and business development collateral

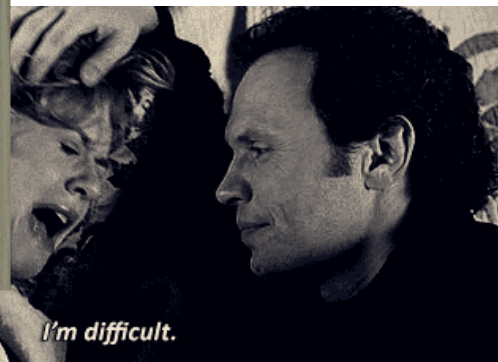
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Questions?



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