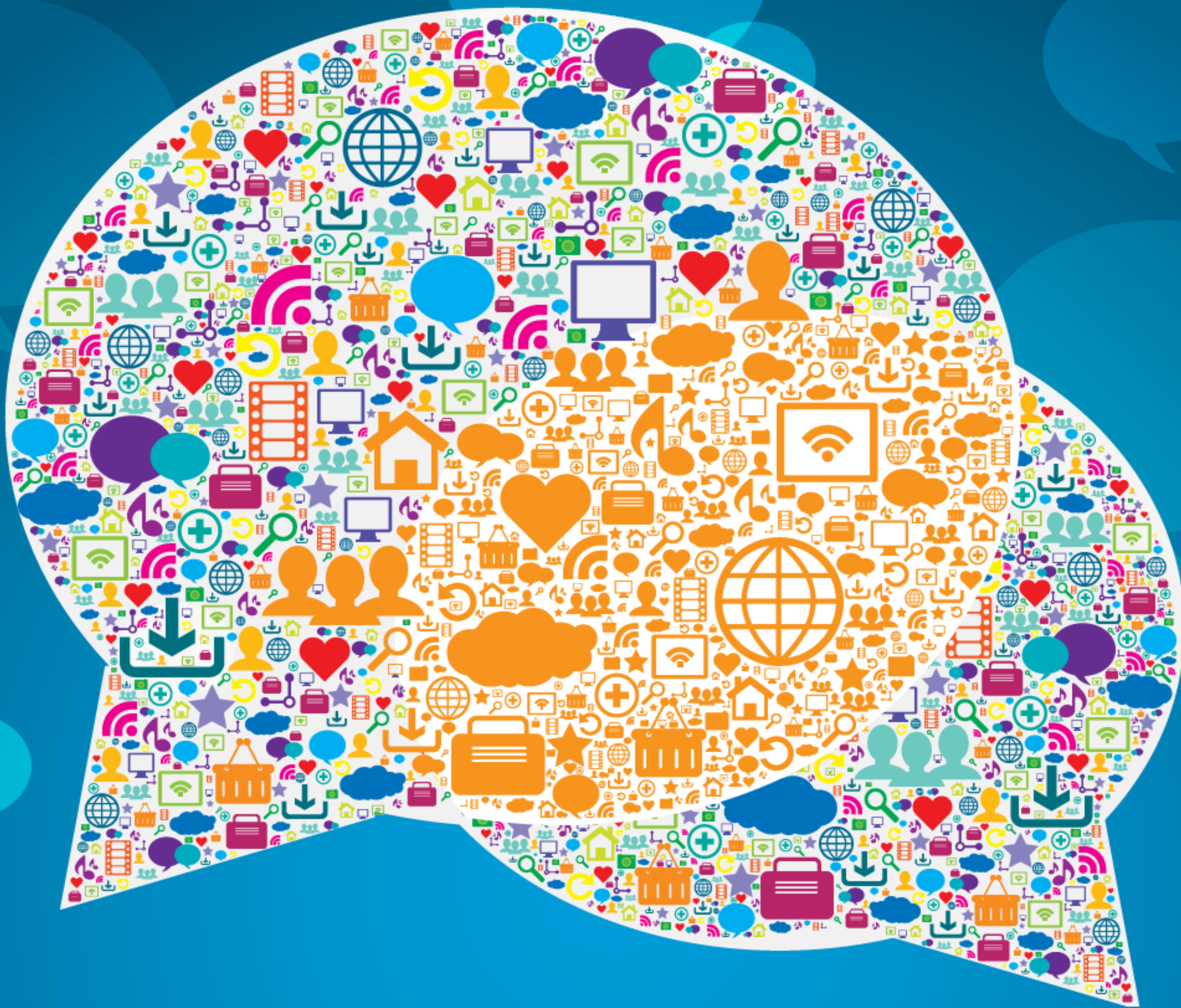

Client Feedback Guide

Even if you think you know why clients choose you to help them with their legal issues, you will learn more than you ever thought imaginable and win greater client loyalty by asking them to share their views.

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A Client Feedback Survey is an excellent way to gain a deeper understanding of your clients and your brand.

The insights gained here will prove invaluable in strengthening your client experience and in helping reinforce your commitment to the market.

Survey Planning

Define Your Objective

In thinking about what you'd like to ask, first clearly and succinctly define exactly what it is that you want to know. This is your overall objective. Write it down to keep it focused in your mind even when a conversation takes different turns.

New Information

Don't bother asking questions when you and the client already know the answers -- ask questions that will result in new information. This helps earn your client's respect, gleans new information for you and manages time for you both.

Set Up

A client survey doesn't have to be a big production. Simply ask a client if they might be able to spare 5 minutes (off the clock, of course) to give you some feedback on their needs and your services. Since most clients are never asked for their perspectives, they will probably be pleasantly surprised and flattered.

A 5-Minute Survey Script

The survey below will take 5 minutes and can be done by phone or in-person. Do not use online or mail-response surveys. It is impersonal and you will get a low response rate.

Tell your client that your questions are divided into two sections: marketing and business development. This will let them know that you've done some planning and their responses to this survey have value. Most of the questions are open-ended, which enables a client to form their own thoughts and allows you to listen carefully for nuances and to ask question to clarify their remarks. Take notes!

Some questions to consider when preparing your survey.

Marketing Questions

What are the specific reasons that you've chosen to work with me/this firm?

Answers could range from location, price, response, work style, etc. Give the client time to think about their response, follow where they lead and be prepared to ask questions to get clarity if need be. Telling them that there is no right or wrong answers may help ease their response.

How can I find more clients like you?

Using a complementary style of questioning lets a client know that they matter to you. Answers to this question can help you learn more about your clients' business habits such as:

- Media - What publications do they read that you could offer to write for or advertise in?
- Activities - What organizations do they belong to and/or what events do they participate in where your involvement might be mutually beneficial for both the organization/event and you?

Might you be able to provide a testimonial?

If the answer is yes, tell them how or where you might use it: website, blog, brochure, etc. Ask them if they could provide a testimonial for LinkedIn. If so, send them a LinkedIn testimonial request and add their quote to your LinkedIn page, and to other online vehicles such as your website, Google+, Facebook page, etc.

Business Development Questions

What types of legal services (mine and others) are important to you?

This will help you learn about what your client needs and how you can help them directly or by offering a referral. It can also help you focus on what they need most from you and determine if their needs fit well with the types of services you want to offer in the future.

What can I/we do better?

This indicates that your performance is important and that what your client considers important is important to you. It also indicates humility and a keenness to learn. All you have to do is ask how you can improve and they will probably tell you. If they respond with "there's nothing you can do better", you can say that while you appreciate their good opinion of you, no one is perfect and that should they think of something that you can improve upon, you will warmly welcome their suggestions anytime.

What other comments or suggestions might you wish to contribute?

Providing an opportunity for additional comments and suggestions toward the end of this type of conversation can open up a myriad of possibilities and opportunities to chat about things you haven't covered or any other topics your client wishes to talk about. Confirm with them that this chat is not on the clock and if there is anything they wish to talk about your time is theirs. It may be that they might mention a current or future need on which you or a colleague can lend a helping hand.

Wrap Up

You will want to bring your conversation to a close by thanking your client for sharing their time and contributing their thoughts.

Afterward, you will want to reflect back on each client conversation to find common themes and ideas that will work best for you in growing your practice.

Creating an environment where client feedback is regularly solicited and welcomed is certainly a marketplace differentiator. In just a few minutes and with a few questions you will understand why clients chose you and your firm. You'll also create a positive experience that will generate goodwill and loyalty.