

How to Conduct an EFFECTIVE Client Interview

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5 Essential Components to a Successful Client Interview Program

Any firm that has not established its own [client interview program](#) could be putting itself in jeopardy.

Client interviewing can yield precious insight into a firm's business practices. They can also lead to new business opportunities and help firms troubleshoot problems before they lead their clients astray.

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Firms that carry out these interviews often see **BIG RESULTS**. The problem, though, is taking that first step - *actually* designing and implementing a program. Some firms just don't know where to begin.

If your firm falls in that category, here are **five client interview essentials** to help kick start your program.

1. Roundup support.

The key to a successful client interview program is to have the **support of firm management** who can set the tone and model expectations.

Before conducting your first interview, consider developing a pilot program that will allow you to test the idea among partners. This will help you identify who's really on board and would support the idea.

2. Nip misconceptions in the bud.

Many people in the firm may harbor misconceptions about client interview programs. Some lawyers are overprotective of their client relationships, or they have a false sense of security concerning their clients satisfaction with the firm.

Don't let these misconceptions around the office deter you! If given enough lead time and asked properly, clients are generally willing (if not eager) to participate. They may even be flattered that the firm cared enough about the relationship to ask.

3. Ask the right questions.

An effective client interview program requires **thoughtful questions** and **someone who is extremely [good at listening](#) and asking probing follow-up questions**. Furthermore, keep these principles in mind:

- **Strive for consistency in questions. This will allow you to make a comparison across clients.**
- **Do your homework on clients and add a few specific questions for each.**
- **Ask open-ended questions and wait for a response.**

4. Send the right person to conduct the interview.

Choosing the right person to conduct the interviews is critical. Many clients are not comfortable giving feedback directly to the person they deal with on a regular basis. Consider

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calling on someone from the marketing department, or hiring an outside consultant who specializes in such interview programs.

5. Share success stories.

After you've conducted some successful interviews, share the stories within the firm. **Tell people what you learned!** This type of detailed information can improve the firm's service as well as lend support to the interview program as a whole.

A successful client interview program has the power to **yield new business and create sustainable, healthy client relationships.**

Engage your clients and learn from them... because what they tell you could prove to be invaluable to the longevity of the firm.

Adapted from article [Why Client Feedback Interviews? Because You Really Do Need to Know](#) by Martha E. Candiello

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