

## **Three Ways to Build Client Loyalty At Your Small Law Firm**

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Think about the brands and services you buy from most. Do you usually stop for lunch at the little sandwich shop near your office or have a long-standing appointment with the same hair stylist? With so many options today, what is it that's making you come back to the same businesses time and time again? The answer: customer loyalty. Whether people are grabbing a bite to eat, getting a haircut or purchasing legal services, clients want to feel valued and appreciated. So, how do you translate that to your legal clients? It's simple! Check out these tips below.

### **Focus on client experience**

It feels inexplicably good when the barista at your favorite coffee shop remembers your "usual," right? It's a small gesture in the grand scheme of things, but her ability to remember that you prefer soy milk in your cappuccino makes you feel like an important customer. You can provide this type of similar personalized service to your legal clients. If you know that one client prefers to meet in person rather than over the phone, or likes to chat for a while before getting down to business, try your best to accommodate them. When your clients feel like you know them more personally, they'll be more inclined to stay with your law firm for the long haul.

### **Stay in touch**

Even if a client's legal matters have wrapped up, it's important that you stay in touch with them. You never know when they might need your services again. Keep a database of all your past and present client contact information, including home and email addresses. Take the time to send birthday and holiday cards throughout the year. It's a minimal amount of work on your end and lets clients know that you still keep them in mind and appreciate their business.

### **Offer long-term client discounts**

Do you have a few clients who have been around for years and years? At this point, you probably know them quite well and have a great working relationship already established. Clients like this are ideal because the "getting to know you and your matters" phase is long over, and you can simply focus on doing great work for them. To show how much you appreciate working with them, offer a long-term client discount. Whether it's a reduced hourly rate or a smaller retainer, these extensions of goodwill let clients know that you enjoy working with them and want to continue that relationship well into the future.

## The top ten ways for lawyers to increase client satisfaction

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In the current economy, other lawyers will be coming after your clients. Every lawyer would therefore be well advised to increase client satisfaction and protect the relationships that ultimately pay your salary, bonus, and rent. You can't make clients too happy. Review these best practices from other law firms and select the tactics that best fit your practice.

For current clients:

1. Schedule a free visit to a client's office, to discuss the client's business needs.
2. Schedule free monthly meetings or telecons "off the clock."
3. Conduct a formal or informal client satisfaction interview.
4. Ask the client what needs to be improved-responsiveness, timeliness, cost, and/or value-and brainstorm together about how to accomplish this.
5. Improve communication about the business implications of legal matters.
6. Increase transparency in budget estimates and billing.
7. Promote efficiencies to reduce cost, and tell clients about them.
8. Tell clients what they can do to help control or reduce legal costs.
9. Organize a client service team.
10. Improve your active listening skills.

For some litigators and others, referral sources are the most important source of new work, and should be treated as if they were clients.

For referral sources:

1. Update people promptly and regularly on the results of each and every client they've sent to you.
2. Ask yourself: What has helped build this relationship in the past? Do it again.
3. Ask yourself: What have I done for them lately? Do more.
4. Take them to lunch and ask: how could I help you?
5. Schedule a visit to the referrer's office to discuss trends in their business, and how you can help.
6. List your top referral sources and give them special treatment-such as giving out your home phone number-and make sure they know that they are in a special category.
7. Do some web research on your source's business and work the facts into your discussions to show that you are doing your homework.
8. Send a handwritten thank you note.
9. Establish a regular schedule for updates. Ask whether they would prefer phone or email.
10. Ask them to describe their ideal clients, then introduce them to some.

- See more at: <https://www.lexisnexis.com/legalnewsroom/legal-business/b/strategy/archive/2010/07/26/the-top-ten-ways-for-lawyers-to-increase-client-satisfaction.aspx?Redirected=true#sthash.yIOeRQ3.dpuf>