



4 Things Clients Want in a Law Firm

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Every law firm and legal practice has one thing in common—they all need clients. Without them, the well of revenue will inevitably run dry. With a combination of basic marketing and good service, many legal professionals will have success getting clients in the door. But many legal professionals today struggle to retain them and keep the flow of consistent billable work going.

Today's clients have more information at their disposal than ever before. They can easily do research on legal professionals online—so if your firm isn't meeting their expectations, they'll find plenty of other firms to turn to. But, if you can provide an exceptional client experience, you'll not only net potential repeat clients, but potential referrals, as well.

In this whitepaper, we'll discuss recent research about clients' expectations from law firms and what changes you can make to not only meet but exceed those expectations.



1



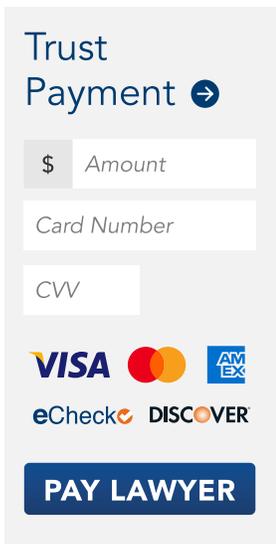
Online payments

If anything is clear, it's that people love **convenience**. It should be no surprise—in our world today, we can get the latest news, reach out to friends, buy groceries, order dinner, or even manage our bank accounts all with a touch of a few buttons on our smartphones. Even how we exchange money has changed thanks to technology, with [new generations](#) paying far less with cash and checks and more often with cards and mobile devices.

As a result, expectations have changed as well—today's clients **expect businesses to let them pay online**. And with online payments quickly becoming the norm, these expectations extend beyond retail businesses and are being applied to the professional service realm. In fact, according to research in the [2019 Clio Legal Trends Report](#), as much as 40 percent of clients said they **would avoid hiring a lawyer who did not accept credit or debit cards**.

Therefore, enabling your practice to [accept card payments online](#) should be one of your top priorities, as should marketing your ability to do so, as soon as it's available. Display it prominently on your website and in your email signatures as you correspond with potential clients. If you have social media for your practice (and [you should](#)), make a post proudly declaring your ability to accept client payments online.

Even if you still have some clients who will pay the old fashioned way, the fact that you're offering online payments can improve client relations. According to Fiserv's [Eighth Annual Billing Household Survey](#), 71 percent of consumers said having multiple ways to pay a bill increased their overall satisfaction with a service. Getting the word out will only serve to boost your firm's hireability and let clients and prospective clients know you care about providing them with every available convenience.



Get paid faster with convenient online payment solutions.

Even better, the benefits of accepting online payments aren't limited to just your clients. Online payments often lead to significantly faster payment cycles for legal



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professionals. In fact, our own data shows that 57 percent of **electronic invoices are paid the same day they are sent out**, and as much as 85 percent of them are paid that same week. Some online payment solutions even offer [scheduled payment features](#), so your client's bill is paid automatically the day it's due. Considering that many legal professionals are still chasing down unpaid invoices, online payments are nothing if not a significant upgrade to your billing process.



2



Strong web presence

With the power of the internet, today's consumers can retrieve information on just about any subject imaginable, nearly as fast as their fingertips can type. As such, when the need arises for legal advice/representation, today's clients turn to the internet and do their homework on local law firms—where they're located, of course, but more importantly, their practice areas, average rates, and track record.

It should go without saying, then, that as a legal professional, you **must** have a website or at the very least a web presence of some kind that represents your practice (such as a [Google Listing](#)). Failing to do so is essentially telling would-be clients that **your practice does not exist**.

But simply having a website isn't good enough—you have to take it a step further than that. Not only do you need a website, but your website needs to be **good at selling your practice**.

First impressions are everything, and you often only have one chance to make a good one. So, make sure your website is well-equipped to provide potential clients with the information they want.

According to the [2019 Clio Legal Trends Report](#), clients indicated that information about a lawyer's experience and credentials were ranked as the most important, with the types of cases they handle as a close second. Therefore, you want to ensure your website **showcases your best accomplishments and wins**. Don't be afraid to boast a little bit—if you have verdict amounts, or any raw data and numbers, share them!

Of course, you'll want to make sure it's abundantly clear from the get-go **what your practice area is**. Spell this out on your homepage. Make sure it can't be missed that you're a family lawyer, or a criminal lawyer. If your firm covers multiple practice areas, make sure this is clear, as well.



Showcase your best accomplishments and wins on your website.

Alongside your expertise, take some time to discuss your **legal process**. Show clients that you get things done, and get them done right. Showcase how you perform research, and your driving philosophy when you handle a case. You want to show clients what they can expect to get with you in their court. This is also a great opportunity to **include testimonials** from previous clients to put some gravitas behind your claims.

Clients have indicated that knowing a lawyer's average rates was important to them, as well. However, conveying this information on your website can be tricky, as every case is different. You might consider instead listing your method of billing, and how you accept payments (such as whether you accept payments online).

Finally, a personal touch goes a long way. If anything, your website should include a **professional picture of yourself**, and anyone else at your firm. Being able to put a face to the person they will eventually consult makes you more than just a service, but a fellow human being who's here to help.



3



Timely, consistent communication

As we mentioned before, your potential clients are shopping around—if they don't get a good vibe from your firm right out of the gate, they already have other options they're considering. So, what else can you do to truly impress would-be clients? **Respond to them!**

This may sound like a no brainer, but you may be surprised to hear that a lack of response is a common complaint amongst clients. The [2019 Clio Legal Trends Report](#) indicated that 64 percent of clients **never heard back from a lawyer** after reaching out to them. Another 79 percent of those surveyed **expected a response within 24 hours** at most.

Failing to respond within that window will likely bump you down the list of hireability. Bear in mind that most clients are reaching out to you at a critical moment in their life. They need legal help as soon as they can get it—if you don't respond to them, another firm will. So get to the front of the line and respond to your client's inquiries in a timely manner.

Not only should you respond promptly, but you should ensure you're reachable through multiple means of communication. It's worth noting that Clio's Legal Trend Report said 68 percent of clients **strongly prefer to contact a lawyer by phone**, while roughly 50 percent combined prefer email or in-person communications.



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Of course, you only have so much time in the day and you have to make the best of the time you have. Many firms hire a paralegal or legal assistant to help with this, but not every legal professional can afford to hire one full-time.

Daily Tasks

✓ address inbox

→ call client

→ case review

Develop a task list, as well as block out time to take care of your tasks.

Thankfully, there are services like call centers and [virtual assistants](#) who can be hired to field your phone calls and take messages for you. Some of them can even **qualify your leads** based on your particular practice, to ensure you are an ideal fit for their case. Of course, virtual assistants can also take over **various other administrative or tedious tasks** that eat up time in your day, whether it be setting up meetings, booking flights, or even ordering food on your behalf.

Improving your responsiveness towards your clients also means **keeping yourself organized**, which is why it's important to develop a task list, as well as block out time to take care of your tasks. Schedule times during your day where you only focus on one task, from checking email to returning phone calls and working on tasks for your cases.

Calendar app like [Google Calendar](#) can not only help you **keep track of your task schedule**, but give you a bird's-eye view of your day. This way, you can determine how much time you have to dedicate to each task. Google Calendar can even set up reminders that notify your phone or desktop when a new time block is coming up.

The more you're able to make effective use of your time each day, the more disciplined and responsive you can be for your clients.





Clear expectations

Though the term “client experience” has become a bit of a buzz term, it’s nevertheless a crucial element for any business to get right in today’s day and age. If your firm is able to cultivate an exceptional client experience, you’ll foster loyalty, good word of mouth about your firm, and even [grow your revenue](#).

So, how does a law firm **provide an exceptional client experience**?

First, it’s important to distinguish that providing a good client experience **does not** equate to **delivering high quality work** to your clients. Of course, getting your job done and getting it done right is important, but this alone won’t bring clients in and retain them. Getting new clients in the door is one thing, but how you treat them after the fact spells the difference in whether they ultimately hire you.

For instance, The [2019 Clio Legal Trends Report](#) showed that 81 percent of those interviewed said they wanted **an answer for each of their questions**. So, when you read their emails or are sitting down to interview them, **read and listen carefully**. Make sure you bring up every question, even if you may not have an immediate or satisfactory answer. Explain what you intend to do to address that question and how you might get an answer for it.

On that note, the way you communicate is important, as well. **Be friendly, but professional, and above all honest** when discussing your client’s case with them. Speak in clear and direct language that they can easily understand. You don’t have to avoid using legal jargon, so long as you leave room to explain if your client isn’t familiar with the terms you’re using.

Remember, your potential clients have likely already perused your website—they’ve likely already read about your expertise and experience, so **don’t regurgitate your website copy** when you speak to them. Instead, show them how that expertise and experience translates into their personal case and what you’ll do for them.



81% say they want an answer for each of their questions.

Also, bear in mind that many of your potential clients are coming to you because of a **difficult situation in their life**. That's why it's important to cultivate a calming and supportive atmosphere when interacting with new clients. One way you can put their mind at ease is by giving them a **clear understanding** of how their case will go. This includes:

- The process your practice or firm takes with cases like theirs; your next steps, what happens after the meeting, etc.
- The estimated timeline for their case.
- How you plan to bill their case, including your rate information, and when your bill will be due.

That last point is particularly important. If there's anything you don't want to foster, it's your client feeling like **the cost of your service is unexpected and confusing**. So, start fostering [good billing habits](#) as soon as you can. It will not only keep you on top of your billing each week, but it will also ensure that your **bills go out on time**. The sooner you can get your bill into the hands of your client, the more likely they'll pay on time. Any delays between the end of a case and the bill arriving will result in an increased chance of frustration (and lack of payment).

Meeting the expectations of modern clients doesn't mean reinventing the wheel. More often than not, it simply means **readjusting some of your existing processes** to enhance your already exceptional service. Moreso, legal professionals who prove themselves to be flexible and willing to



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adapt will strengthen their careers and increase their chances of success as the legal world continues to evolve.

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About LawPay

LawPay was developed specifically to provide a sophisticated payment solution for legal professionals. The LawPay platform contractually protects your client funds, correctly separating earned and unearned fees and by restricting the ability of any third-party from debiting monies from a trust or IOLTA account. LawPay is available through 110+ state, local, and specialty bars, and the ABA Advantage program as a vetted and approved payment solution for the legal industry. Learn more about how LawPay can help your firm at lawpay.com.

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Roy Smith

Card Number
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