



## Global Client Feedback Initiatives

Global law firm benchmarking survey on client feedback initiatives and best practices

Martindale-Hubbell®

2011 Research Study | Summary Report



In association with:



---

## Summary Report

---

LexisNexis Martindale-Hubbell recently completed a benchmarking report to examine client feedback efforts of international law firms to help form a broader understanding of some of the key trends in practices that are taking place in firms globally, including: objectives and importance of feedback initiatives, responsibility for gathering and communicating feedback and how firms use information obtained.

The quantitative survey obtained responses from 415 senior personnel at law firms across seven world regions: Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe, Western Europe, Latin America, Middle East and the United States.

The findings of the survey cover the following issues:

- The percentage of law firms currently seeking client feedback
- The goals of client feedback programmes
- The methods by which law firms obtain feedback from their clients
- How firms share learned feedback (with the entire firm and individual lawyers)
- The perceived results of client feedback programmes
- Future trends in client feedback
- Best practices: Structuring a client feedback programme

This summary report highlights some of the findings from the research study, and was undertaken by Wicker Park Group, a U.S. consulting group specializing in client feedback programmes for professional services firms.

**The full report:** Global law firm benchmarking survey on client feedback initiatives and best practices, includes the complete findings from the survey with additional insights.

To obtain a copy of the full report, please visit: [www.martindale-hubbell.co.uk/feedback](http://www.martindale-hubbell.co.uk/feedback)

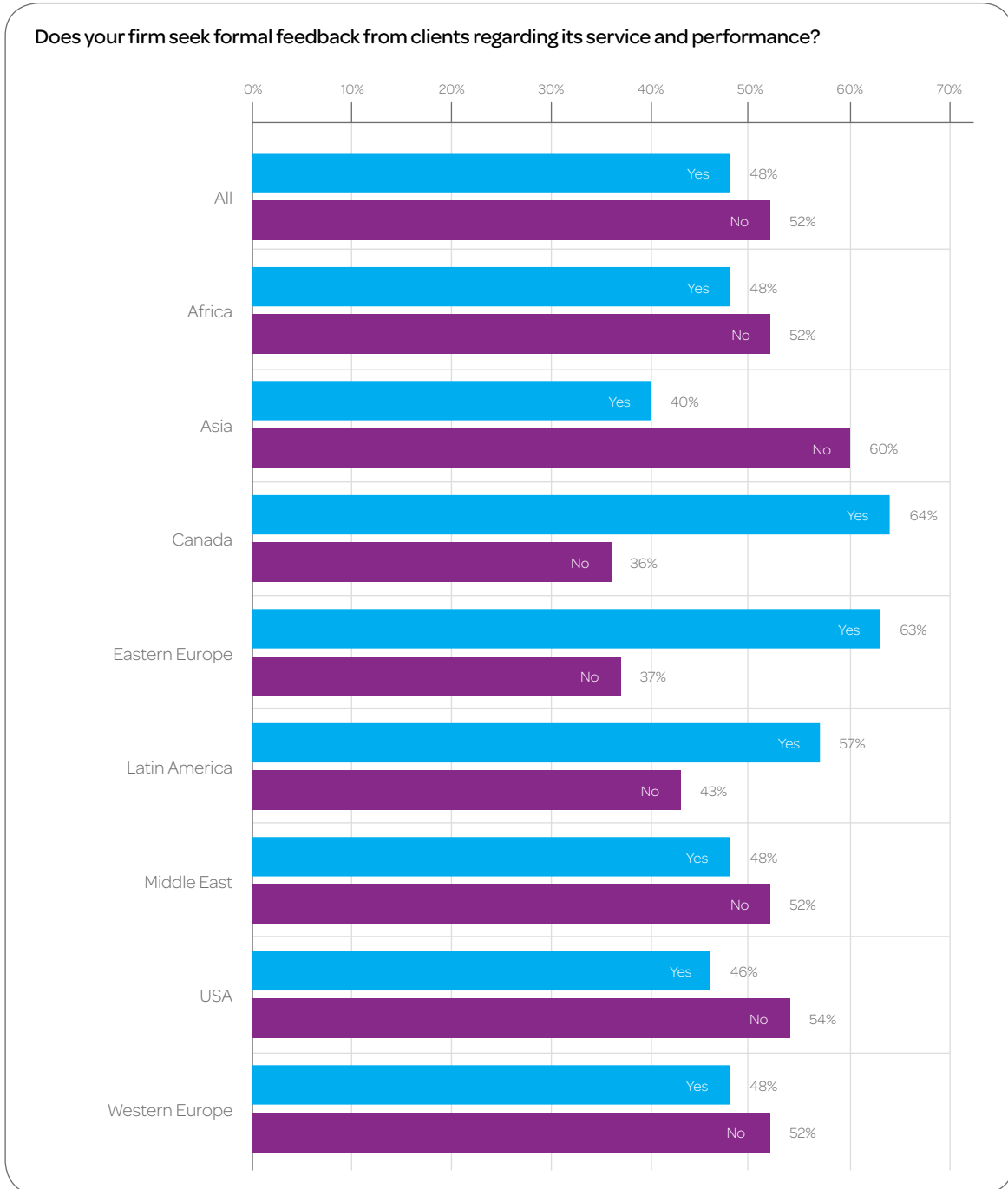
---

©LexisNexis, the Knowledge Burst logo, Martindale-Hubbell and martindale.com are registered trademarks of Reed Elsevier Properties Inc., registered in the United States and/or other jurisdictions and used under license. Copyright 2011 Martindale-Hubbell, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

Whilst every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information in this publication, LexisNexis Martindale-Hubbell makes no warranty, express or implied concerning the content of this publication, products or services offered herein, all of which are provided "as is". LexisNexis Martindale-Hubbell expressly disclaims all liability for reliance upon the information contained herein. In no event will LexisNexis Martindale-Hubbell, its affiliates or other suppliers be liable for direct, special, incidental, or consequential damages (including, without limitation, damages for loss of business profits, business interruption, loss of business information or other pecuniary loss) arising directly or indirectly from the use of (or failure to use) or reliance on the information contained herein.

## Percentage of firms currently seeking feedback

While law firms increasingly understand the value of client feedback initiatives, 52% of respondent firms did not seek formal feedback from their own clients.



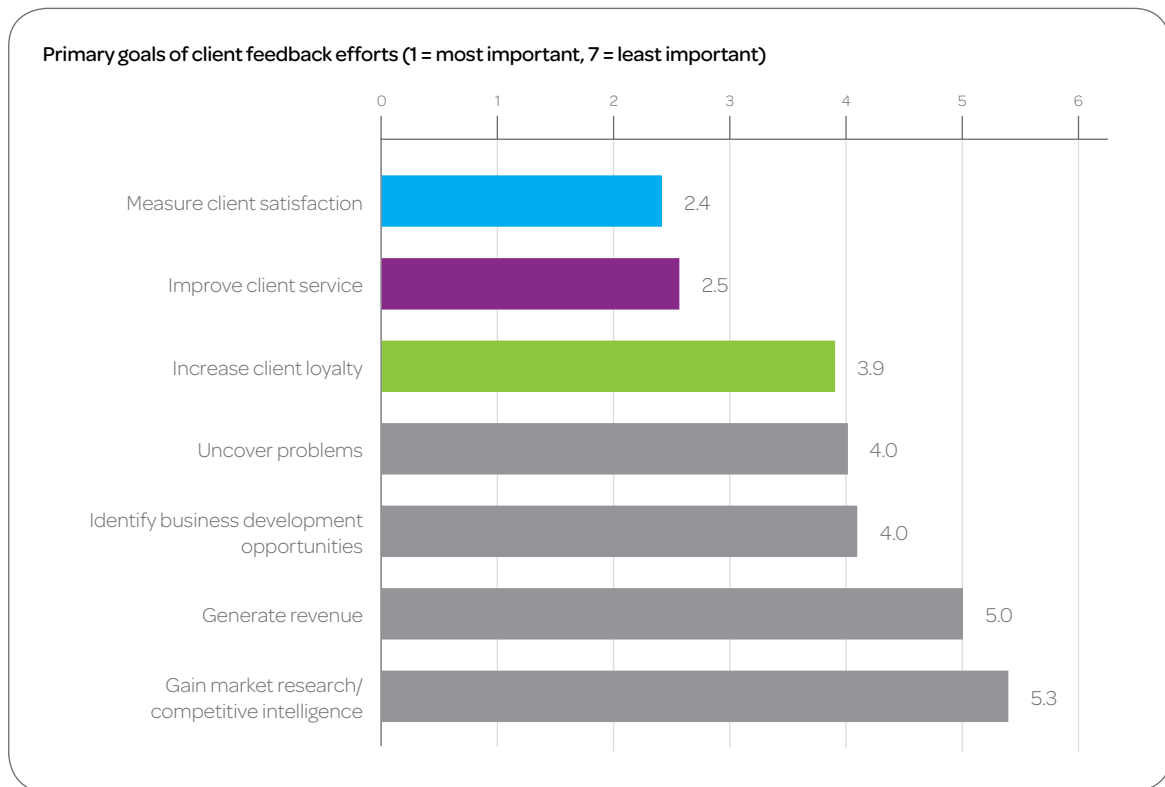
Among those firms that did not seek client feedback, 59% said it was not a priority for the firm's leadership. In addition, 38% said they had insufficient staff or resources available to obtain feedback.

Among those firms that did seek client feedback, 91% believe that it was either 'important' or 'extremely important' to their practice. However, despite this recognition, the time and resources allocated to collecting client feedback was relatively small. Sixty-four percent of those firms who sought client feedback spent less than 5% of their marketing and business development budget on client feedback programmes.

## Goals of client feedback

When those respondents who do seek client feedback were asked about the goals of their feedback programmes, 'measuring client satisfaction' and 'improving client services' were the two most popular answers. These replies are not surprising, given that they are often considered the two most tangible results of an effective client feedback initiative.

Following those answers, three other goals were ranked closely together: 'increasing client loyalty', 'uncovering problems' and 'identifying business development opportunities'.



## Methods for seeking feedback and responsibility for feedback efforts

Among the varied methods used for seeking feedback, the two most popular ones were written or electronic surveys administered by the firm (48%) or face-to-face interviews conducted by the firm's leadership (47%).

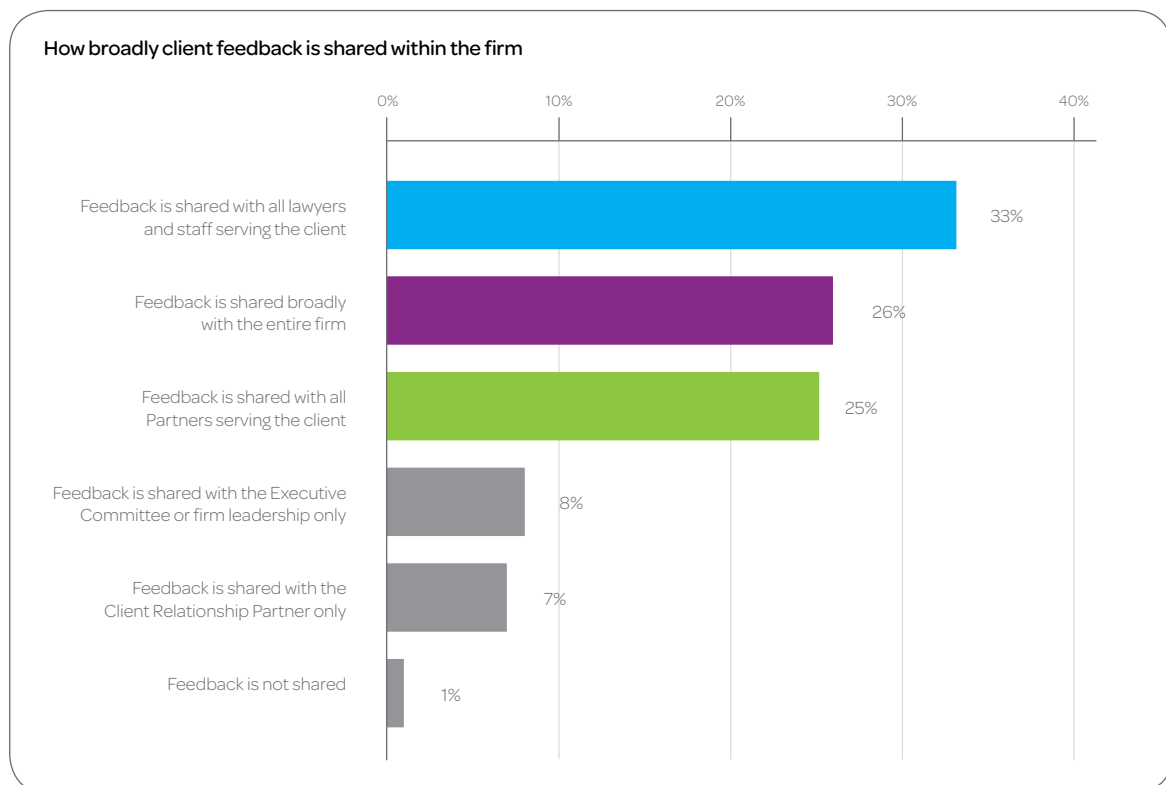
When asked who was responsible for managing their firm's client feedback programme, 54% of respondents said the Managing Partner has primary responsibility, with a further 20% indicating marketing/business development personnel took the lead. In relation to the actual collection of feedback data, 42% of respondents said the firm's Managing or Marketing Partner was responsible, while 28% said that the marketing/business development personnel were in charge.

It is worth noting that the survey revealed a discrepancy among survey respondents between the 'people' and 'processes' aspect of their firm's client feedback programmes. While 59% either 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' their firm was using the most appropriate personnel to conduct its client feedback programme, there was less certainty as to whether their firm was using the correct methodology for collecting the client feedback data. In relation to this latter issue, 47% 'neither agreed nor disagreed' that they were using the correct methodology, compared to 23% that either 'disagreed' or 'strongly disagreed' with the suggestion that the correct methodology was being used.

## How knowledge is shared with the firm and individual lawyers

Most firms favour informal methods for sharing intelligence obtained from their client feedback programmes. Thirty-eight percent (38%) of respondents shared feedback through informal summaries, whilst 35% shared feedback verbally. Only 21% of survey respondents said feedback was shared via an extensive formal written report, which also included suggested follow-up strategies.

In relation to how broadly client feedback was shared within the firm, 33% said all lawyers and personnel serving the client were included, 26% said it was shared broadly with the entire firm and 25% said it was shared with all Partners serving the client.



## Perceived results of feedback

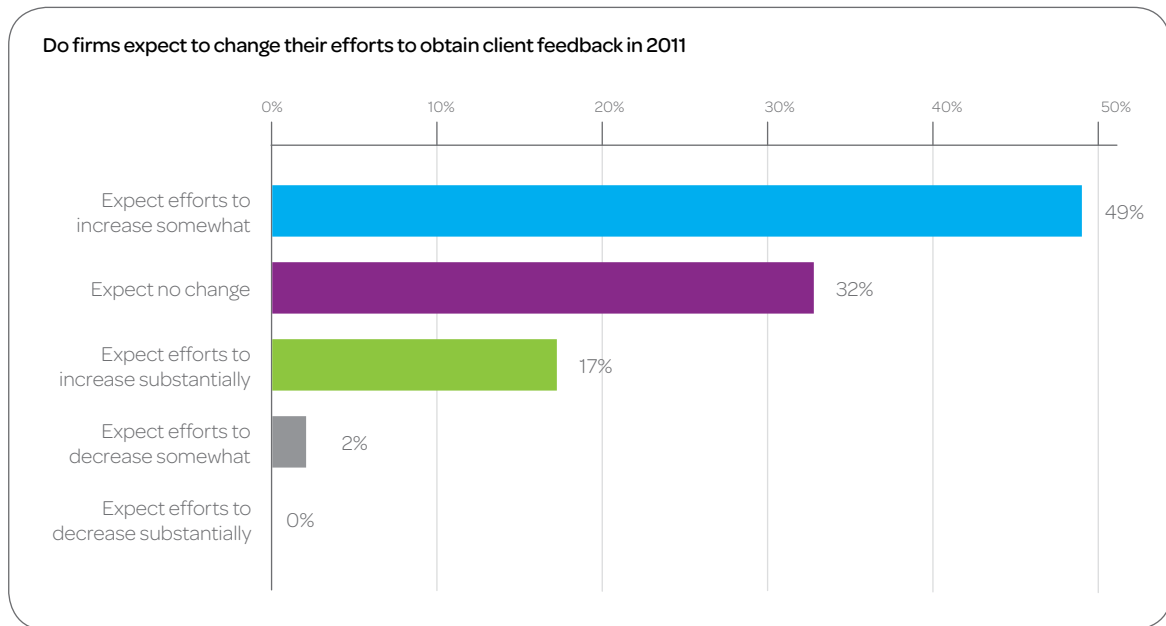
This survey indicates that lawyers believe client feedback is important and can bring positive benefits to law firms. Respondents were asked whether clients value the firm's willingness to ask for feedback, and 83% either 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed'. Also, when asked whether behaviours at the firm have been adjusted as a result of client feedback, 61% of respondents 'agreed', while 10% 'strongly agreed'.

Interestingly, however, law firms were pragmatic about whether the time and effort taken to conduct a client feedback programme represented a tangible return on investment. When asked this question directly, 44% of respondents gave either 'neutral' or 'negative' responses.

## Future plans regarding feedback

When asked about future plans in relation to obtaining client feedback, 44% of respondents said that they do not plan to obtain feedback in the future. A majority (56%) said they would ask for client feedback in the future.

Among the respondents that do not plan to obtain client feedback, almost half said that they did not plan to do so because it was not a priority for their firm's leadership. A further 21% attributed the decision to a lack of staff or resources. Among those firms that do plan to seek feedback, 49% expect efforts to 'increase somewhat' and 17% expect efforts to 'increase substantially'. Thirty-two percent (32%) expect 'no change' in feedback efforts, while only 2% expect client feedback efforts to decrease.



## The Parties

### About LexisNexis Martindale-Hubbell

International buyers of legal services trust LexisNexis® Martindale-Hubbell® to help them identify, validate and select a law firm or lawyer every day. Martindale.com is a leading international law directory connecting law firms and buyers of legal services worldwide. With a database of more than one million lawyers and law firms in 160 countries and over 8 million unique visitors per year, martindale.com provides global visibility for law firms, helping them to be found by prospective buyers of legal services who are searching the internet. Martindale-Hubbell is part of the LexisNexis Group, a member of the Reed Elsevier Group plc.

For more information visit: [www.martindale.com](http://www.martindale.com) or email [connect@martindale.com](mailto:connect@martindale.com)

### About Wicker Park Group

The Wicker Park Group is dedicated to improving the relationships that firms have with their clients, primarily through client feedback interviews. Wicker Park Group's consultants have over 15 years of experience of the in-house counsel sector and bring a unique perspective on how General Counsel think, and more importantly, the factors that determine a successful relationship with external counsel.

Wicker Park Group presently works with a wide-range of law firms, helping them to achieve measurable results via in-person interviews and use of their proprietary ClientKit™. Clients include some of the world's largest to small boutiques as well as other professional service organizations.

For more information visit: [www.wickerparkgroup.com](http://www.wickerparkgroup.com)

---

# How Martindale-Hubbell can help your law firm win new business

---

Martindale.com is a leading international law directory, connecting law firms and high quality buyers of legal services worldwide. Present your law firm in a comprehensive online profile to help buyers identify and validate law firms for their shortlist.

## Global visibility for your law firm

With over 8 million unique visitors every year - more than competing legal directories - martindale.com provides a source of prospects for your law firm. Benefit from Martindale-Hubbell's strong reputation amongst buyers of legal services as a trusted reference since 1868, with an online database of over 1 million law firms and lawyers in 160 countries.

## Attract a new audience

Help your law firm to be found by prospective buyers of legal services who are searching the internet. Each month there are over 2 million views of law firms and lawyers on martindale.com.

## Showcase your law firm's expertise

Engage buyers by showing that you have relevant experience to meet their legal needs. Providing examples of your client work and additional information about your law firm through articles, case studies and independent client ratings, enables prospective buyers to validate your experience and credibility more effectively, and make a more informed choice about doing business with your firm.

## Track your results

Martindale.com's powerful tracking features allow you to see who is interested in your firm, measure the effectiveness of your profile and support decisions to grow your business. Discover which of your competitors prospective buyers looked at, names of international corporations looking at your law firm how many times your profile has been viewed and geographic location of prospective buyers.

## Client feedback and ratings

The automated Client Review Tool on martindale.com enables lawyers to invite their existing clients to independently rate them. Ratings are published as part of the lawyer's profile and provide an overall rating and scores against communication, responsiveness, quality of service and value for money.

## Build your legal network

Martindale.com Connected is the free online network exclusively for legal professionals. Identify and connect with In-House Counsel and private practice lawyers around the world. Leverage your connections to help find new business, learn about opposing counsel, or collaborate on everyday challenges. Use blogs, forums and groups to network with clients and colleagues, increase your legal knowledge and share expertise.

### Learn more about winning new business with martindale.com

Visit: [www.martindale-hubbell.co.uk](http://www.martindale-hubbell.co.uk)

Email: [connect@martindale.com](mailto:connect@martindale.com)

Join martindale.com Connected for free at: [www.martindale.com/connected](http://www.martindale.com/connected)

**For more information contact:**

Email: [connect@martindale.com](mailto:connect@martindale.com)  
[www.martindale.com](http://www.martindale.com)

Martindale-Hubbell® International  
Halsbury House  
35 Chancery Lane  
London, WC2A 1EL  
United Kingdom

Phone: +44 (0)20 7347 3700 | Fax: +44 (0)20 7347 3701