

# Buyer Behavior by the Numbers

A Cross-Generational Look at Decision Influences and Drivers of Engagement for Legal Buyers



**Kat Kocurek**  
VP of Marketing  
**ClearlyRated**

# General Housekeeping

- This is an “encore” webinar!  
**And we are recording** – you’ll get a copy later today.
- Email me with questions:  
[kat.kocurek@clearlyrated.com](mailto:kat.kocurek@clearlyrated.com)
- Connect with me on LinkedIn:  
[linkedin.com/in/katkocurek](https://www.linkedin.com/in/katkocurek)



# Quick introduction



# Quick introduction



Est. 2003

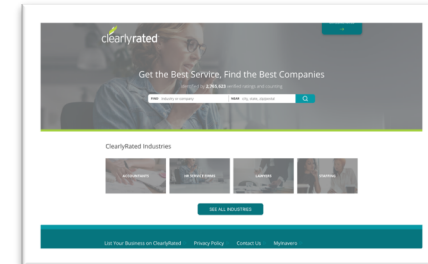
Focus on professional service providers since 2007

We believe it's **good business** to place the client experience at the heart of your firm's growth strategy.



Annual award program for client service.

Recognizes firms that have demonstrated exceptional service quality based exclusively on ratings provided by their clients.



Launched July 2018

Online service provider directory that translates client satisfaction scores into online ratings and testimonials.

# About the Research

## 2019 Legal Buyer and Client Satisfaction Study

Surveyed **589 buyers and clients** of corporate legal services

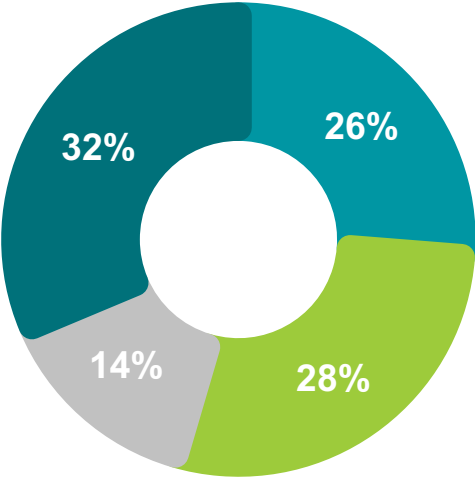
### We asked:

- How legal clients rate their experience with their primary law firm.
- What drives satisfaction with the legal service experience, and what drives willingness to refer.
- Which resources buyers of legal services prioritize when navigating and vetting prospective law firms to work with.
- How firm reputation and the client experience influence the buyer journey and opportunities for growth.

# 2019 Legal Buyer Benchmark Report

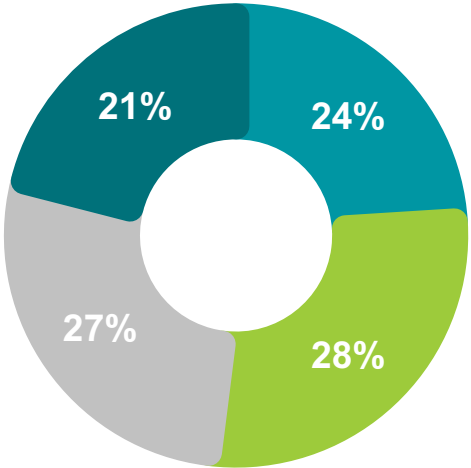
Surveyed **589** buyers and clients of corporate legal services

### Company Size



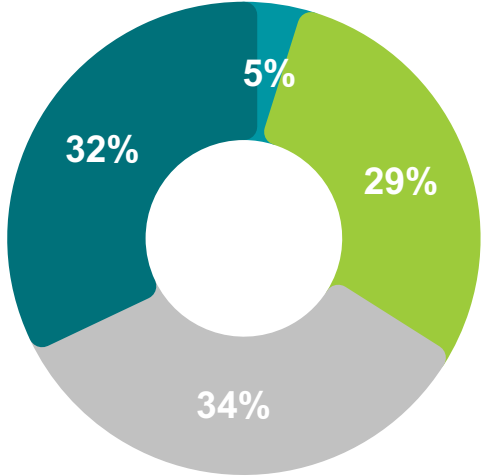
- Less than 100
- 100 to 499
- 500 to 999
- 1000 or More

### Company Revenue



- \$10 million or less
- \$10-\$50 million
- \$50-\$500 million
- Over \$500 million

### Generation



- Gen Z (23 & under)
- Millennial (24-38)
- Gen X (39-53)
- Baby Boomer (54-72)



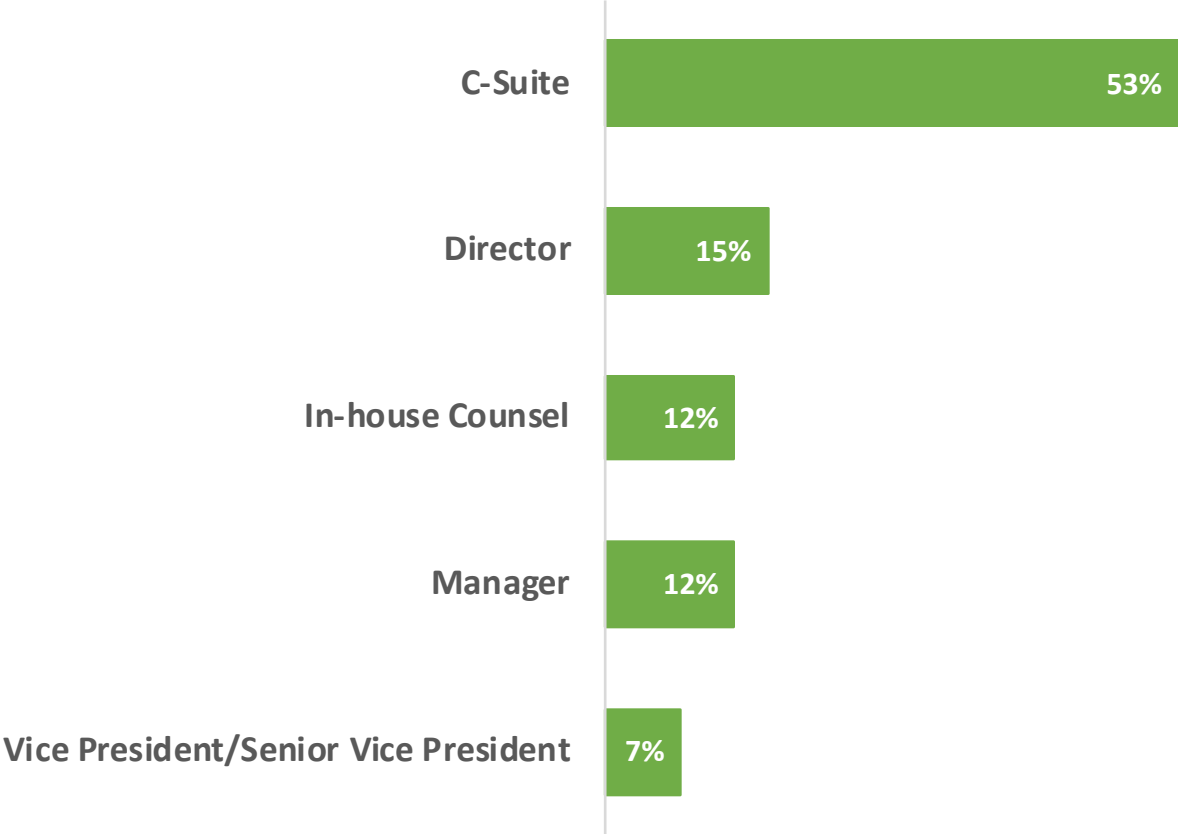
SOURCE: ClearlyRated 2019



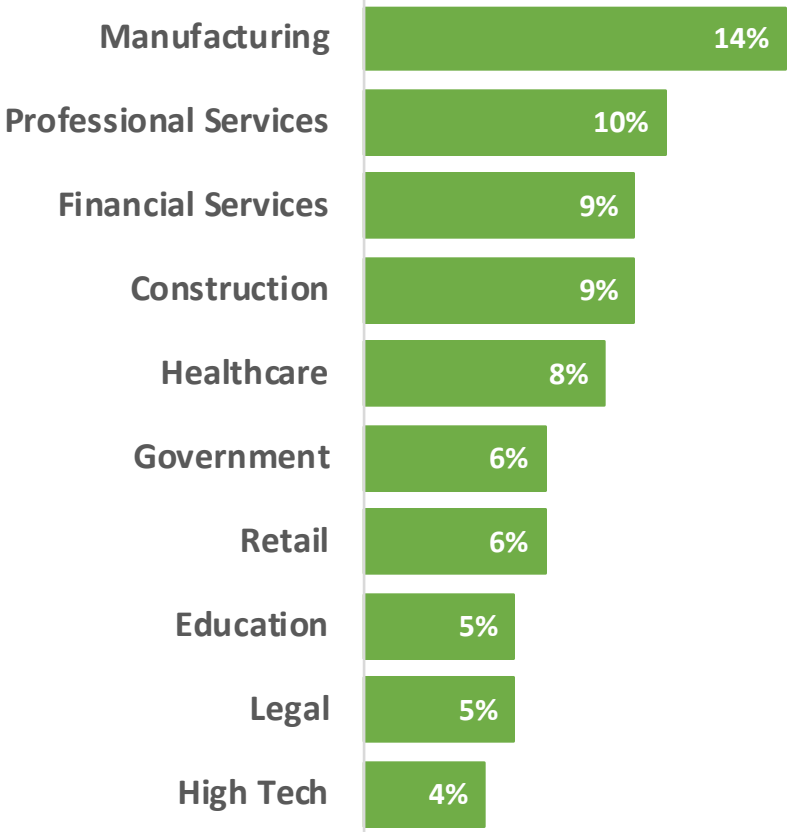
# 2019 Legal Buyer Benchmark Report

Surveyed **589** buyers and clients of corporate legal services

**Job Title / Role**



**Industry**



SOURCE: ClearlyRated 2019



# Today's Legal Buyers



**Boomer Bill**  
Born 1946 - 1964

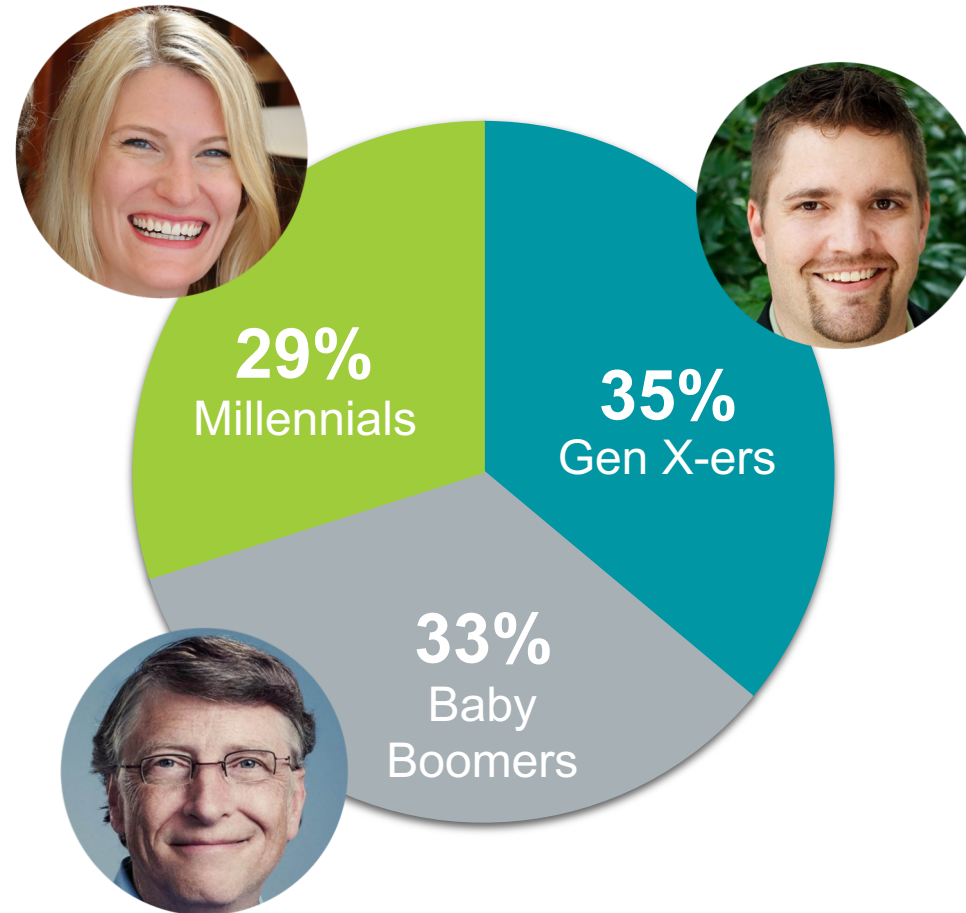


**X-er Eric**  
Born 1965 - 1979



**Millennial Liz**  
Born 1980 - 1992

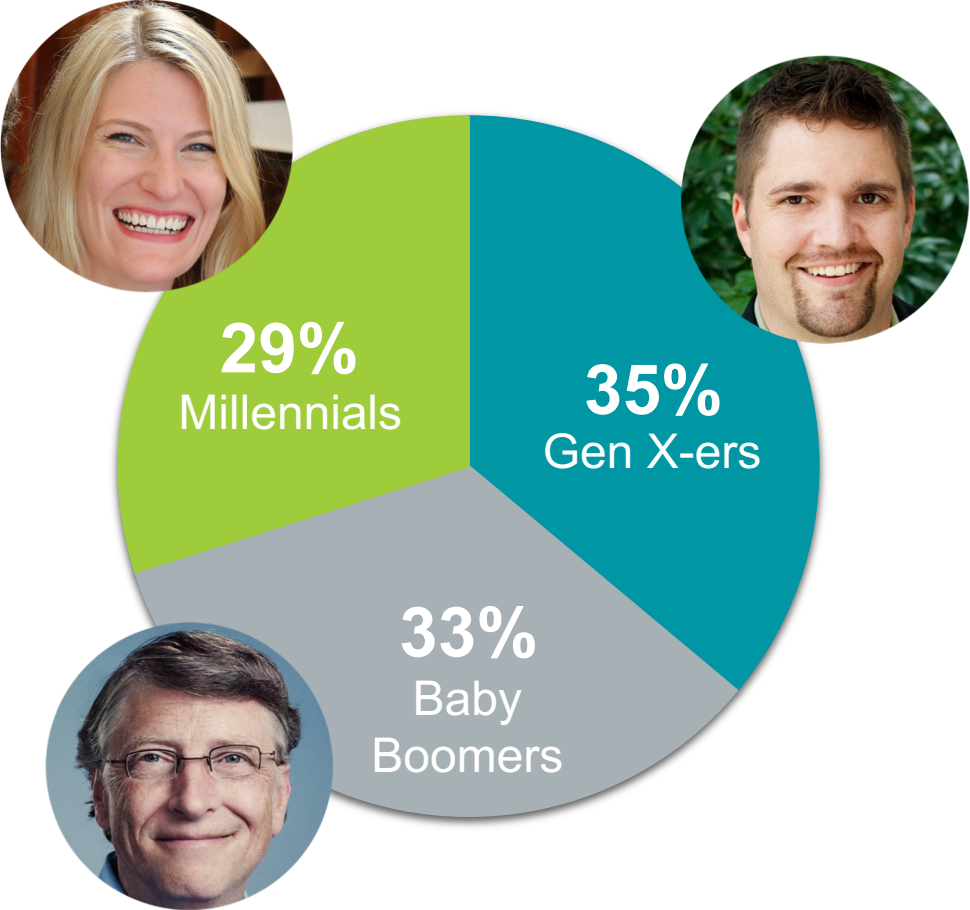
# Buyer demographics are changing...



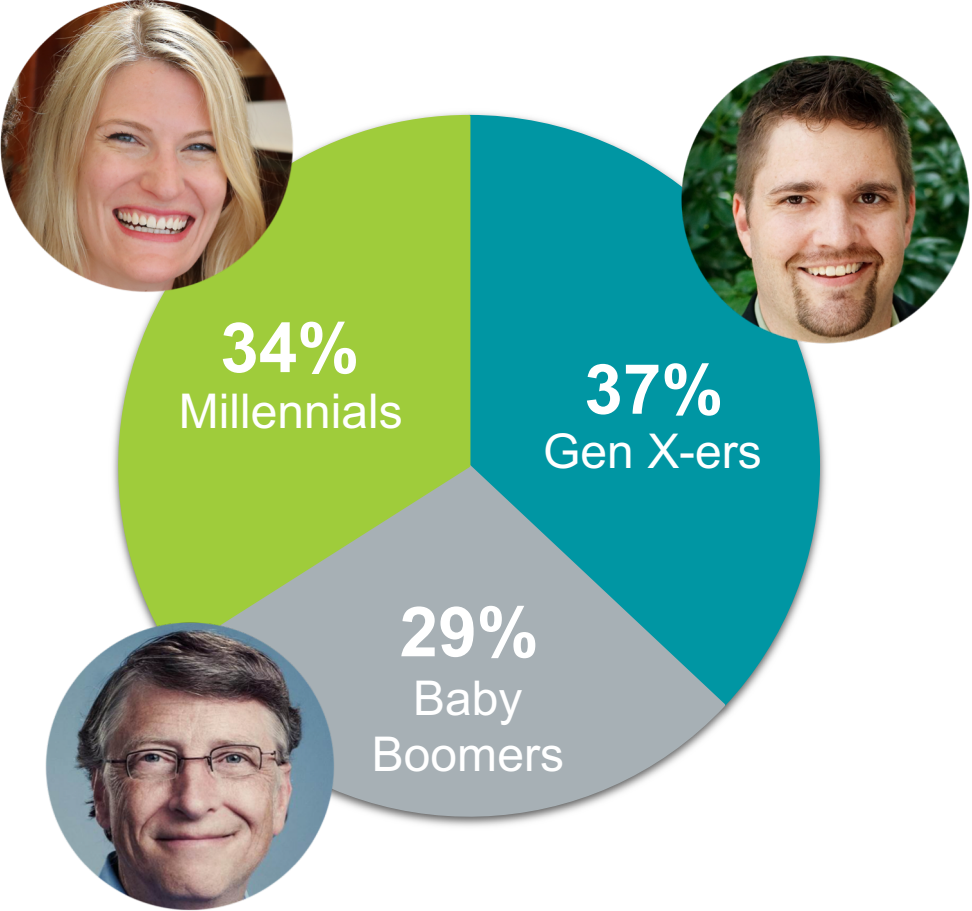
**Legal buyer & client sample by generation**

SOURCE: ClearlyRated 2019

# Buyer demographics are changing...



Legal buyer & client sample by generation



“Relationship Lead” by generation



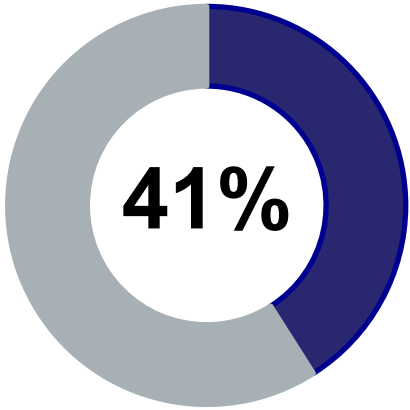
# Legal Buyer Trends

Similarities and differences across cohorts

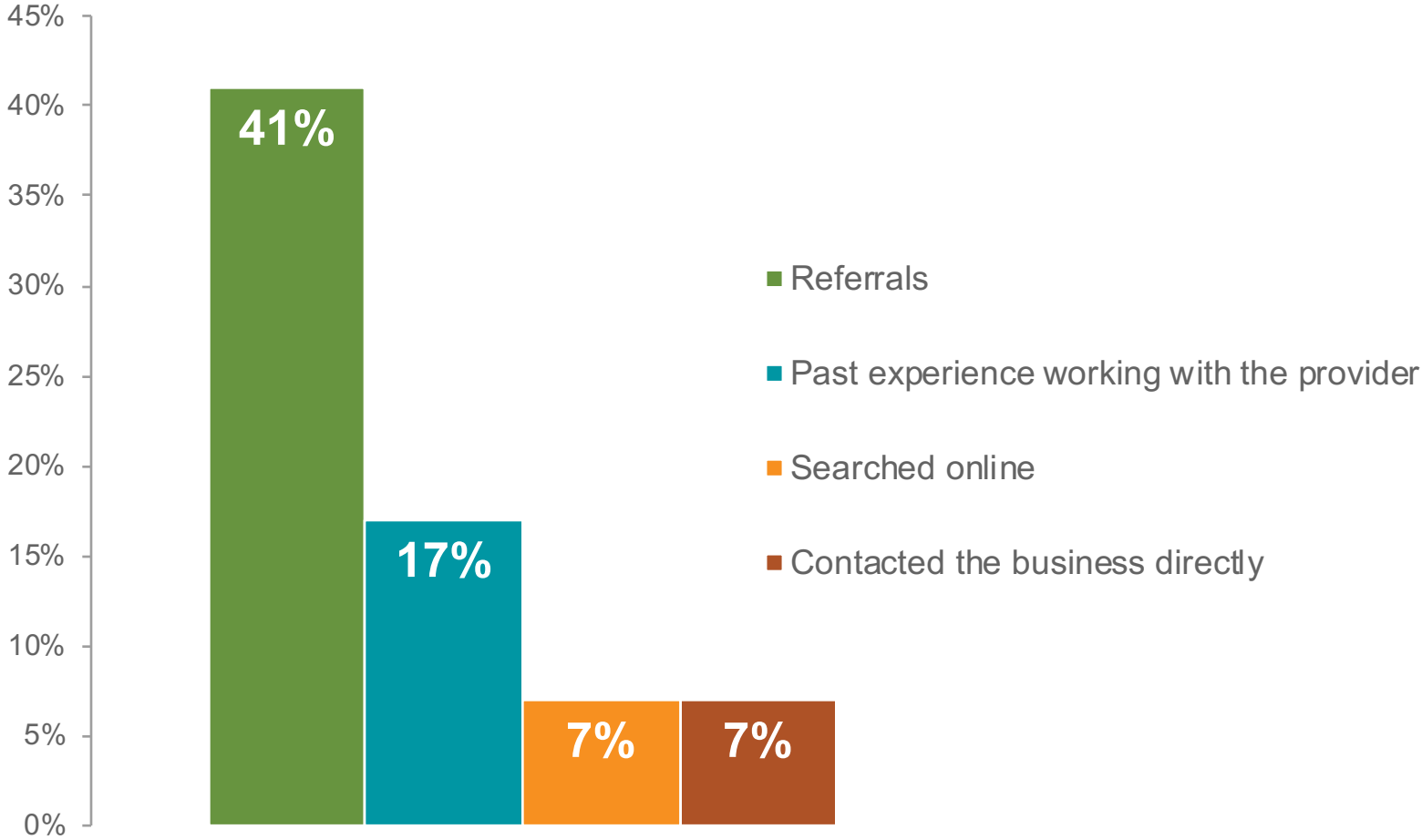
# Legal Buyer Trends

**#1** Referrals are still a top resource for buyers seeking a law firm to hire.

# Trend #1: Referrals are your buyers' top resource.



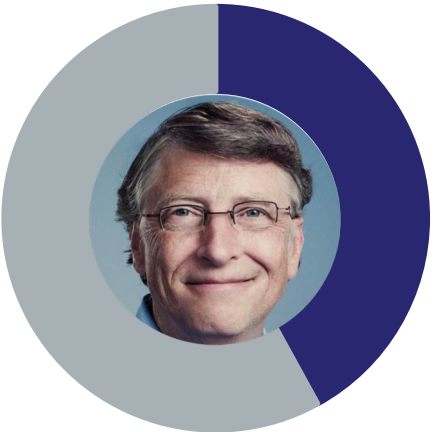
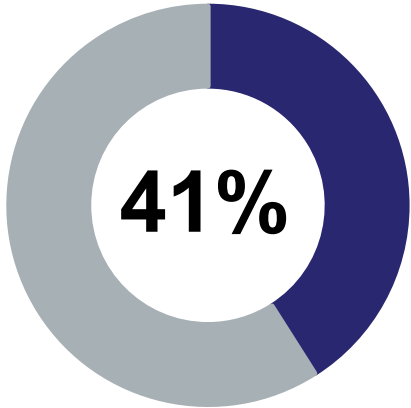
% of legal buyers rely on referrals as their first resource when vetting a law firm



# Trend #1: Referrals are your buyers' top resource.

% of legal buyers (by generation) who rely on referrals as first-used resource for vetting law firms

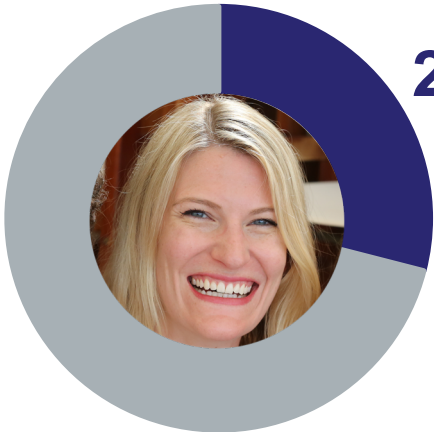
Overall sample = **2 in 5**



**Boomer Bill**



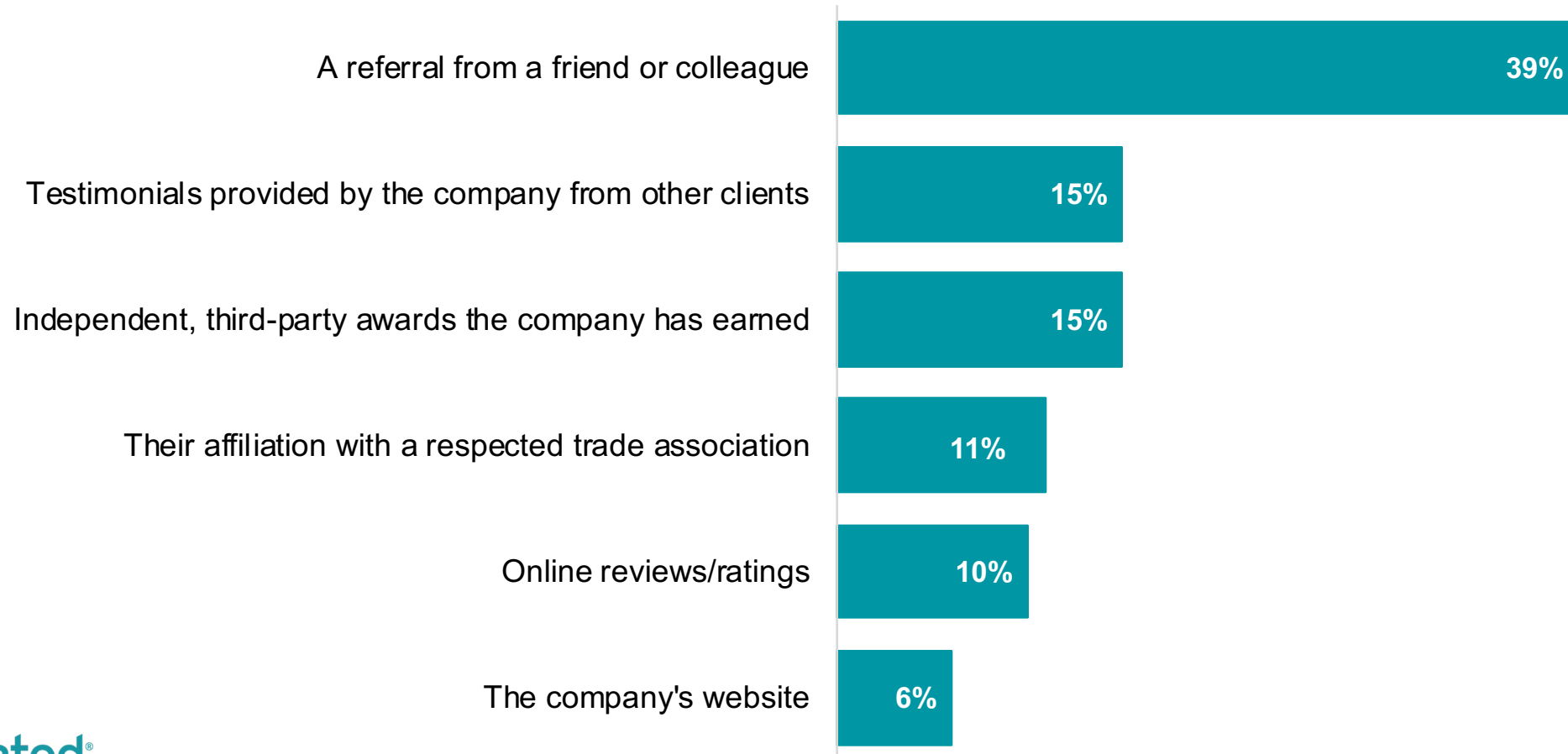
**X-er Eric**



**Millennial Liz**

# Trend #1: Referrals are your buyers' top resource.

## Most trusted sources of information when determining quality of a service provider



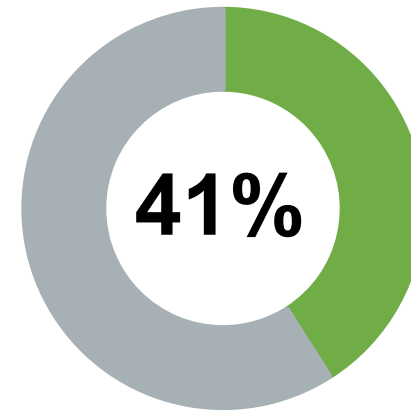
# Legal Buyer Trends

- #1** Referrals are still a top resource for buyers seeking a law firm to hire.
- #2** Online resources are gaining prominence.

## Trend #2: Online resources gain prominence.



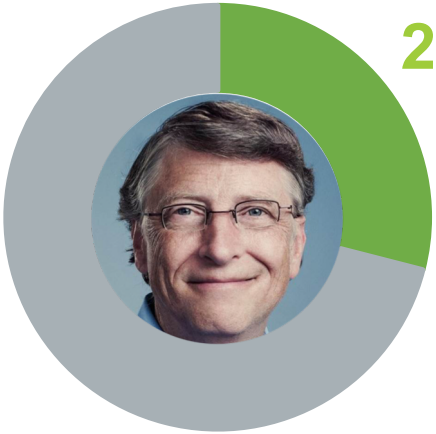
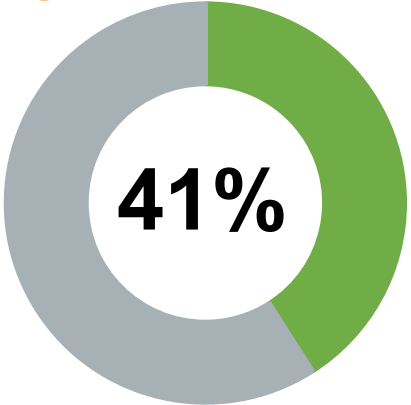
Average amount of time that prospective clients spend researching potential service providers online?



# Trend #2: Online resources gain prominence.

% of total research / vetting time spent using online resources (by generation)

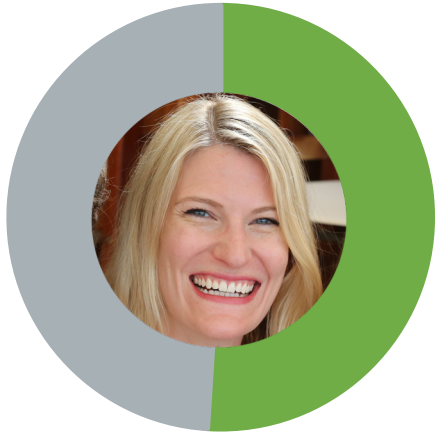
Overall sample =



**Boomer Bill**



**X-er Eric**



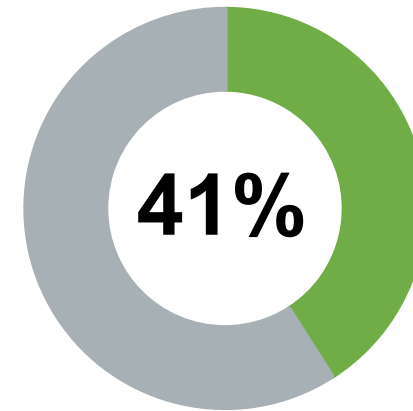
**Millennial Liz**



## Trend #2: Online resources gain prominence.



Average amount of time that prospective clients spend researching potential service providers online?



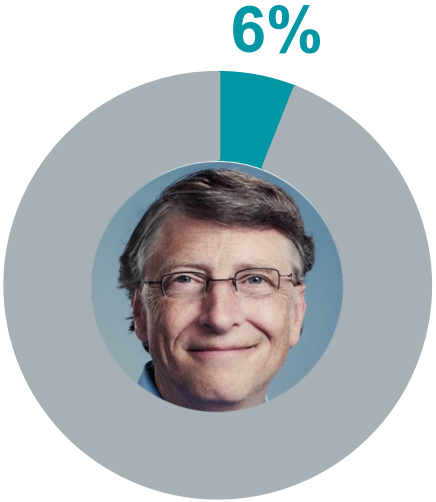
**1 in 4** legal buyers claim that online resources are their first-used method during the vetting process.



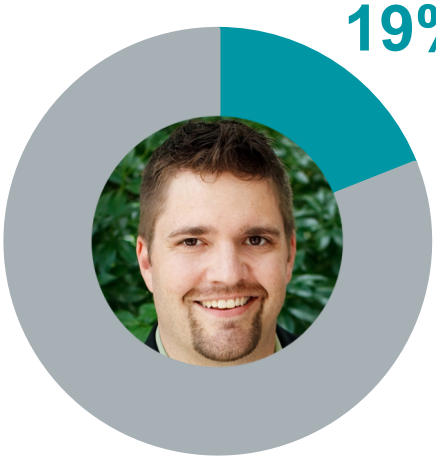
# Trend #2: Online resources gain prominence.

Online resources are first-used method when vetting law firms (by generation)

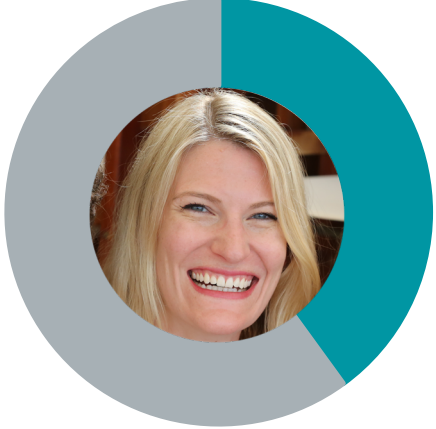
Overall sample = 25% 



**Boomer Bill**

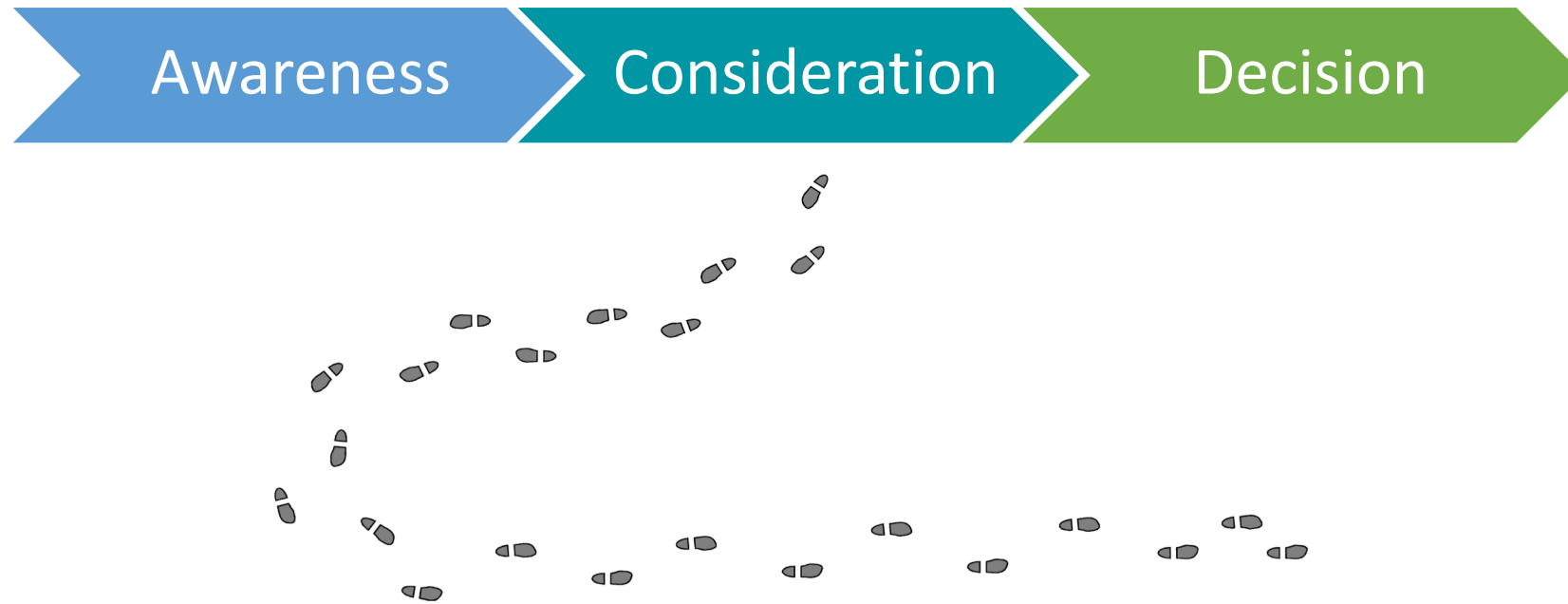


**X-er Eric**



**Millennial Liz**

## Trend #2: Online resources gain prominence.



**Online resources** offer an opportunity to validate or invalidate an assumed fit. It's a logical “**consideration phase**” activity for the modern service buyer.

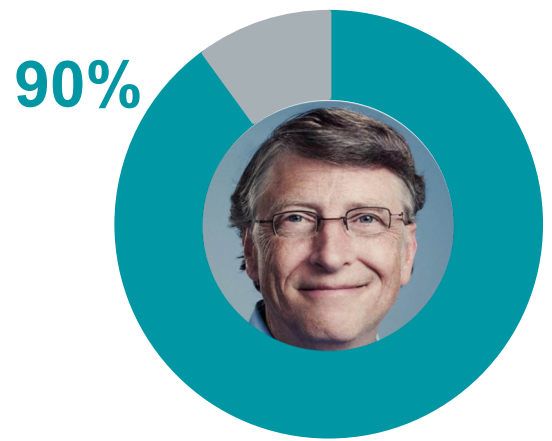
# Legal Buyer Trends

- #1** Referrals are still a top resource for buyers seeking a law firm to hire.
- #2** Online resources are gaining prominence.
- #3** Legal buyers show a preference for research.

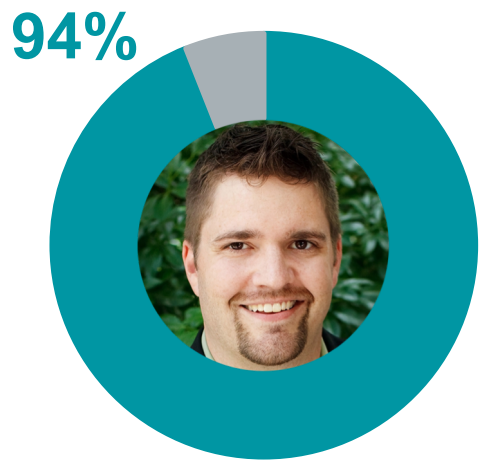
# Trend #3: Legal buyers show a preference for research.

Legal buyers who do additional research after receiving a referral (by generation)

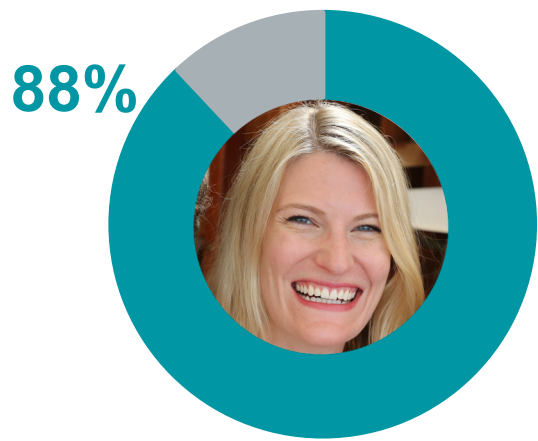
Overall sample = **9 in 10**



**Boomer Bill**



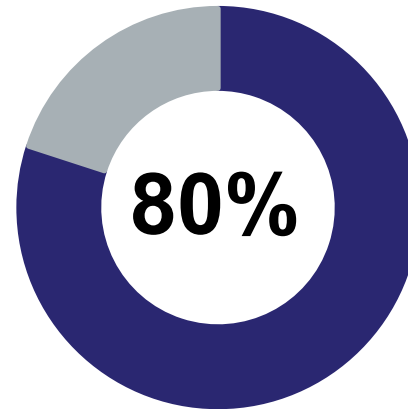
**X-er Eric**



**Millennial Liz**

## Trend #3: Legal buyers show a preference for research.

**8 in 10** legal buyers don't want to engage a provider until they have done at least some research on their own.



# Trend #3: Legal buyers show a preference for research.

Ideally, when do you like to engage with a provider that your company is considering?



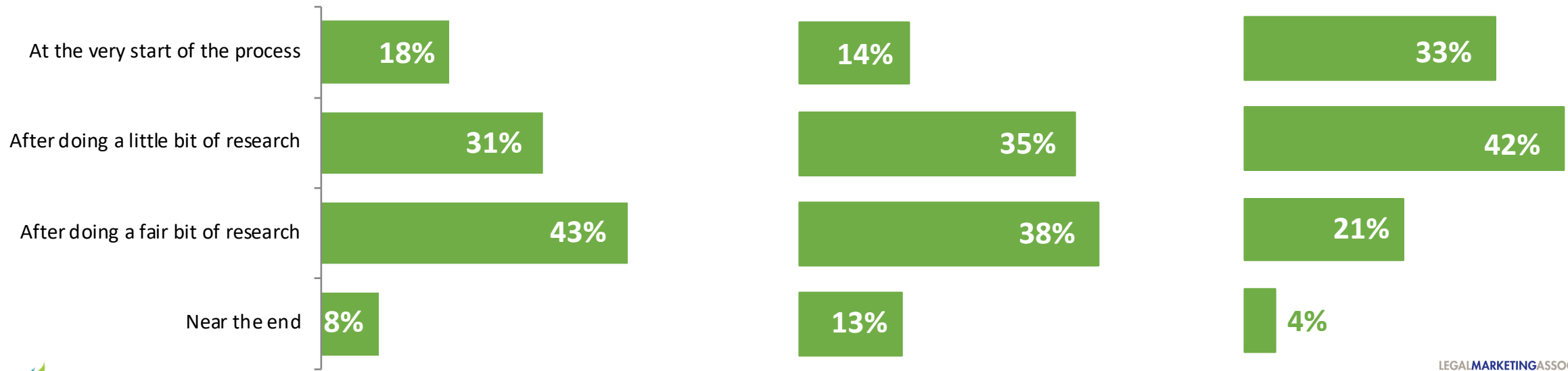
**Boomer Bill**



**X-er Eric**

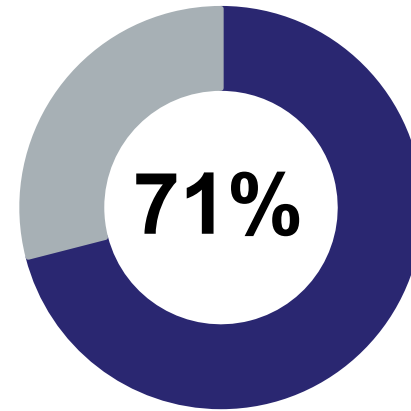


**Millennial Liz**



## Trend #3: Legal buyers show a preference for research.

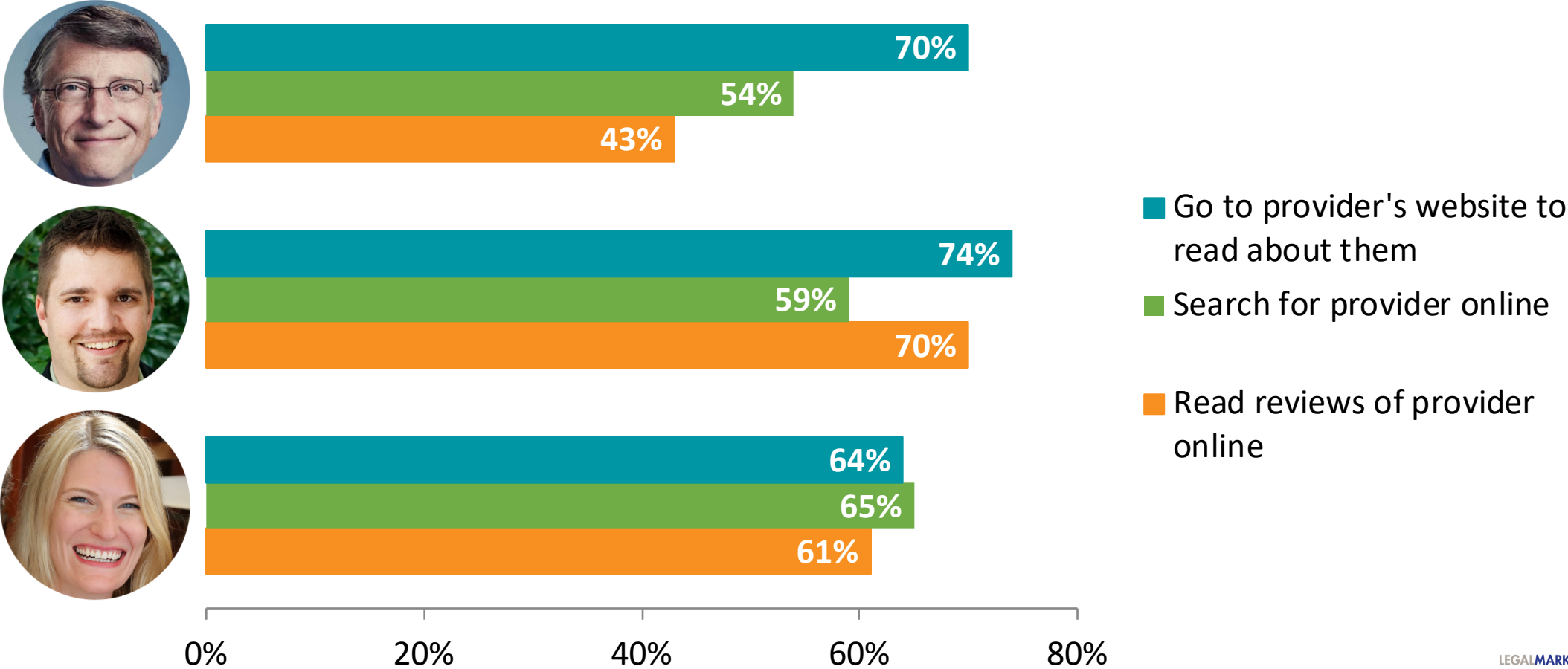
**7 in 10** legal buyers that conduct additional research after a referral will turn to online resources.





# Trend #3: Legal buyers show a preference for research.

Actions taken after referral by generation



SOURCE: ClearlyRated 2019

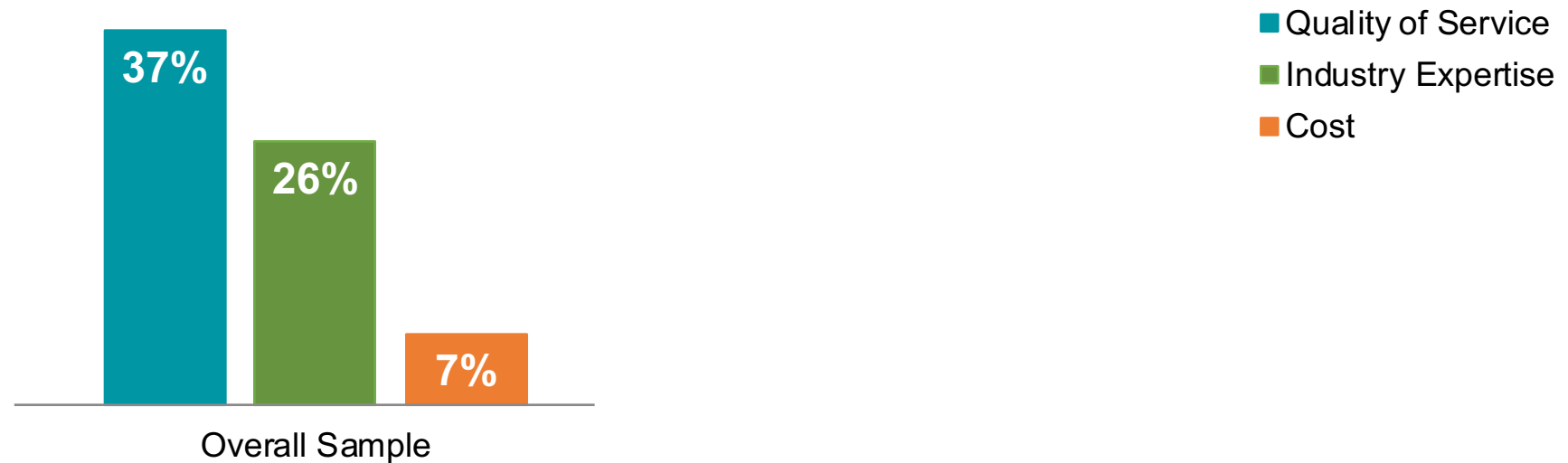


# Legal Buyer Trends

- #1** Referrals are still a top resource for buyers seeking a law firm to hire.
- #2** Online resources are gaining prominence.
- #3** Legal buyers show a preference for research.
- #4** Quality of service and industry expertise trump cost.

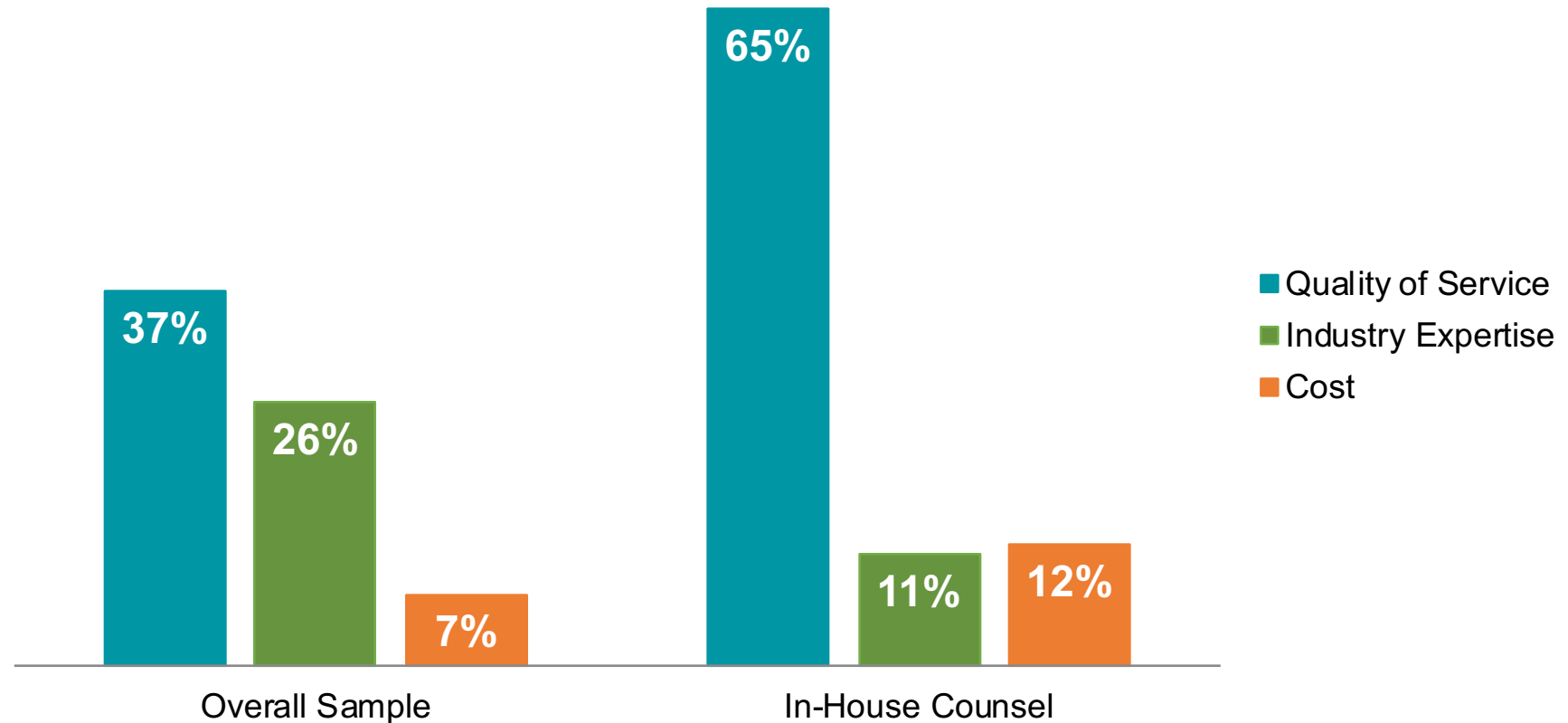
# Trend #4: Quality of service and industry expertise trump cost.

Most important factors considered when selecting law firm



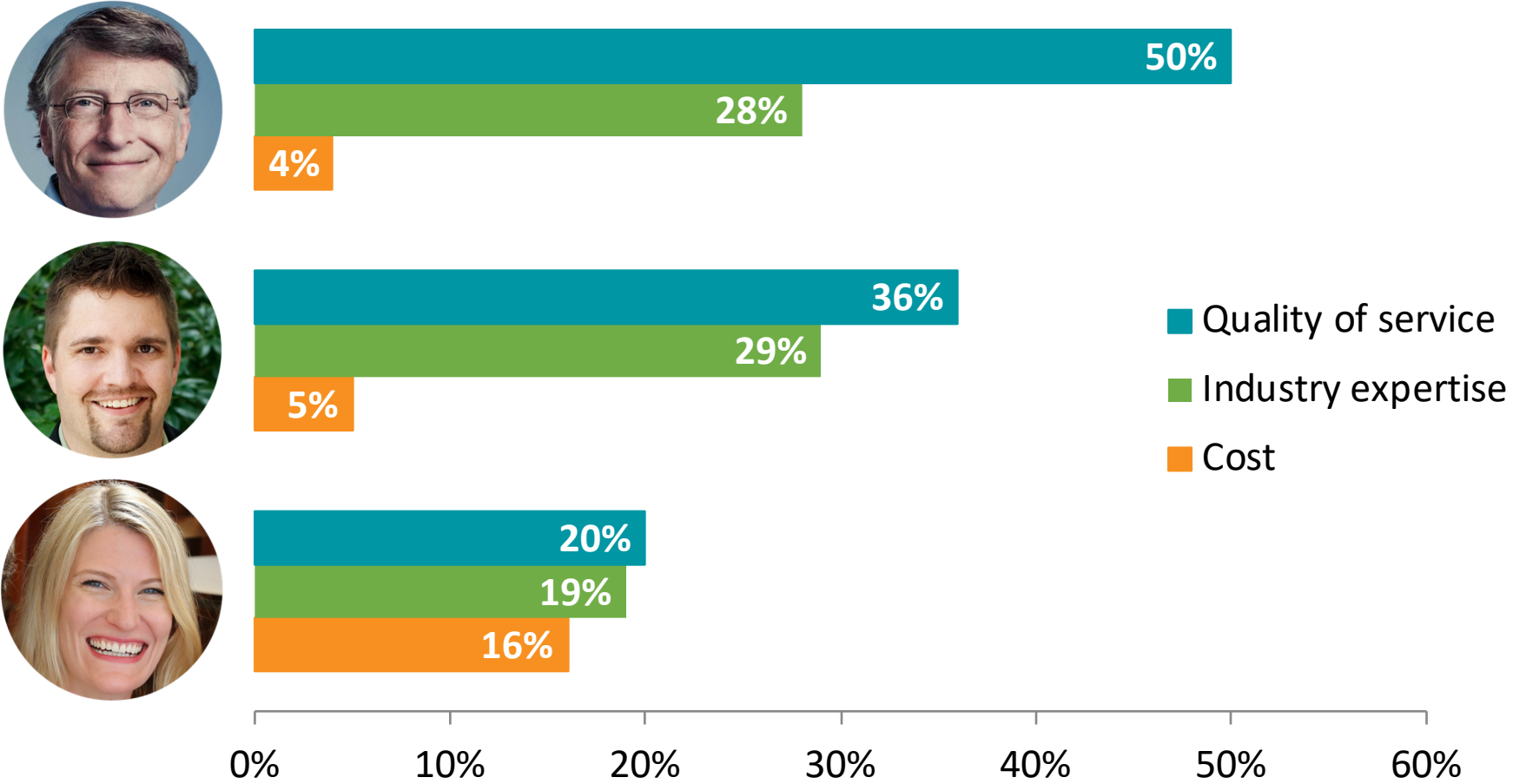
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SOURCE: ClearlyRated 2019



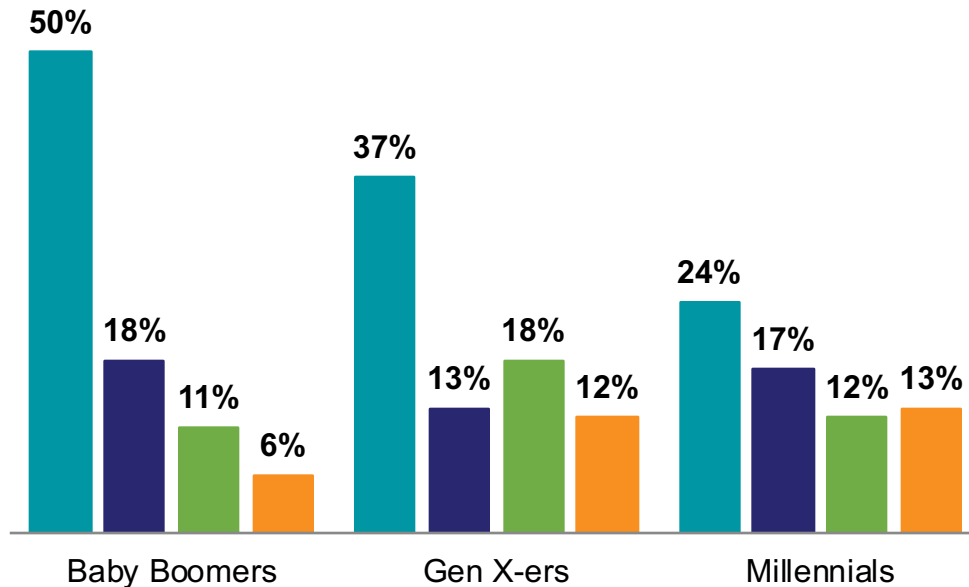
# Legal Buyer Trends

- #1** Referrals are still a top resource for buyers seeking a law firm to hire.
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- #3** Legal buyers show a preference for research.
- #4** Quality of service and industry expertise trump cost.
- #5** Buyers trust your clients more than they trust you.

# Trend #5: Buyers trust your clients more than they trust you.

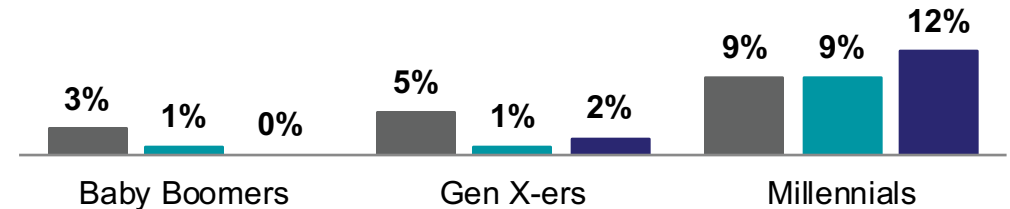
## THINGS OTHER PEOPLE SAY

'Most trusted' source of information when determining the quality of a potential provider.



- Referral from a Friend or Colleague
- Independent 3rd-party Awards
- Client Testimonials
- Online Ratings & Reviews

## THINGS YOU SAY



- Firm Website
- Marketing / Advertising
- Social Media Posts



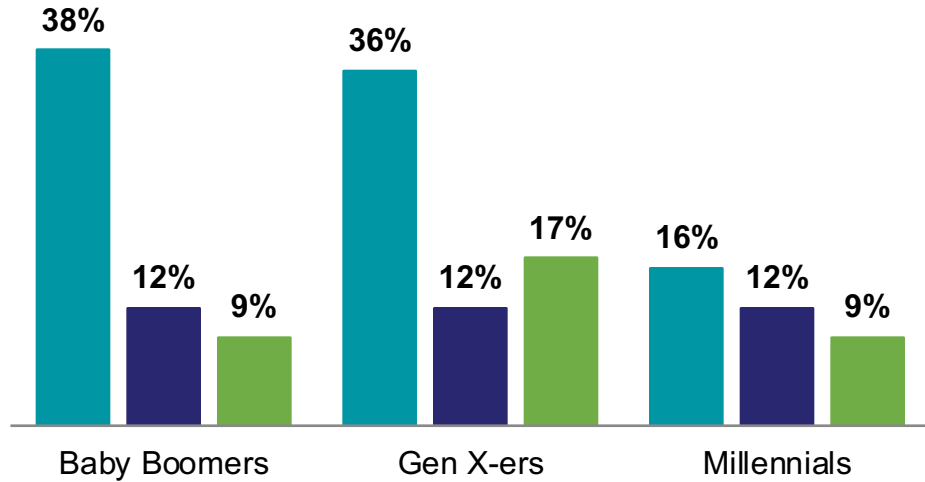
SOURCE: ClearlyRated 2019



# Trend #5: Buyers trust your clients more than they trust you.

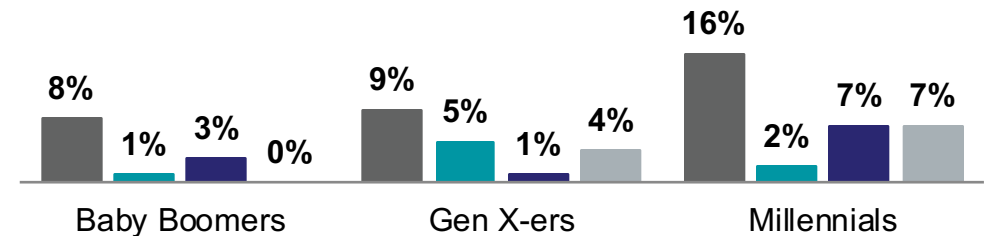
## THINGS OTHER PEOPLE SAY

'Most persuasive' method for demonstrating industry expertise.



- Testimonials from Clients
- Satisfaction Scores from Clients
- Industry Certifications

## THINGS YOU SAY

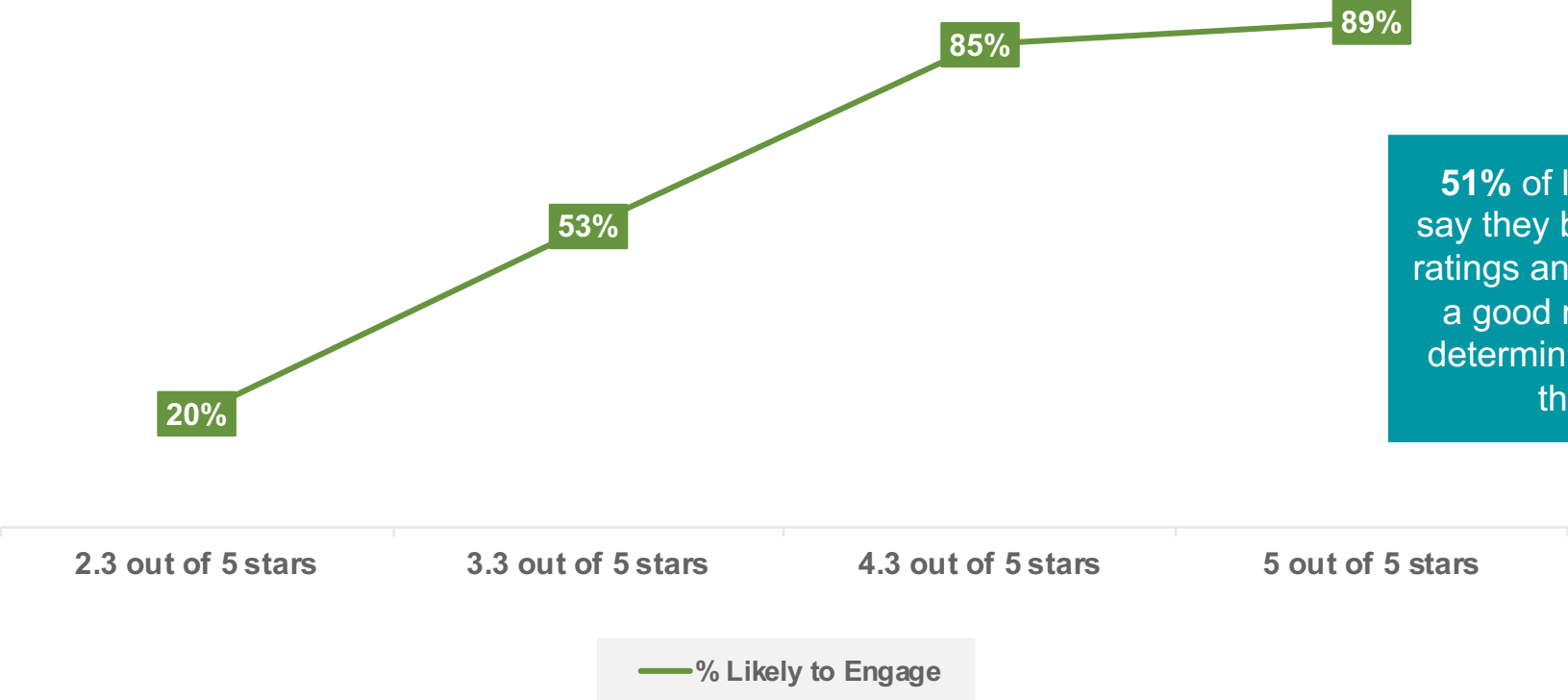


- Presentations at Industry Events
- Whitepapers
- Webinars on Topics of Interest
- Sharing Knowledge/Expertise on Social Media



# Trend #5: Buyers trust your clients more than they trust you.

How likely are you to engage with a law firm you are considering that has online ratings of...



51% of legal buyers say they believe online ratings and reviews are a good resource for determining quality of the firm



SOURCE: ClearlyRated 2019



# Legal Buyer Trends

- #1** Referrals are still a top resource for buyers seeking a law firm to hire.
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- #3** Legal buyers show a preference for research.
- #4** Quality of service and industry expertise trump cost.
- #5** Buyers trust your clients more than they trust you.

# So, what can you do?

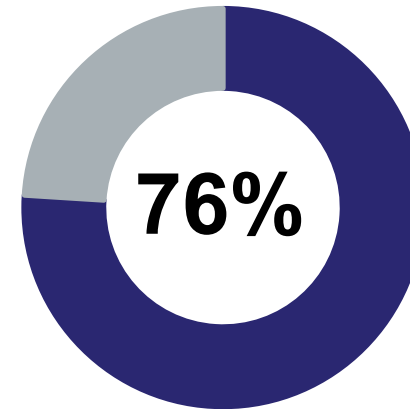
Actionable strategies for leveraging our research for firm growth.

# So, what can you do?

- #1** Measure the referrability of your firm and practitioners.
- #2** Capture – and utilize – testimonials as much as humanly possible.
- #3** Actively build your firm’s online reputation.
- #4** Build a strategy for educating and winning business with millennials.
- #5** Lead the charge in your organization to prioritize the client experience.

# #1: Measure “referrability” of your firm and lawyers.

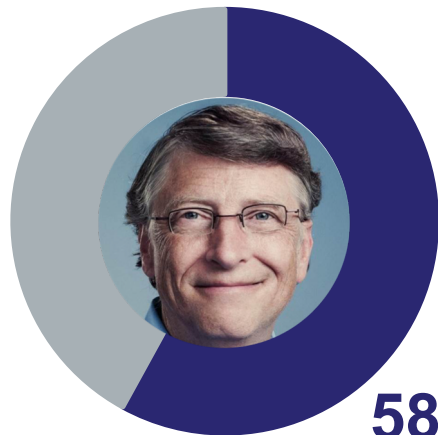
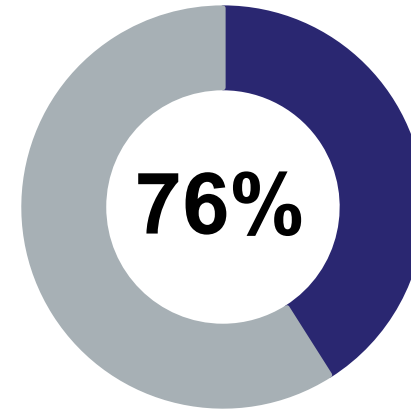
**3 in 4** law firm clients would consider working with a new law firm that is recommended to them.



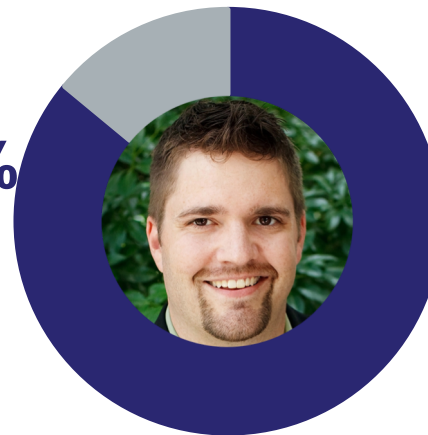
# #1: Measure “referrability” of your firm and lawyers.

% of clients who would consider a new law firm that was recommended to them.

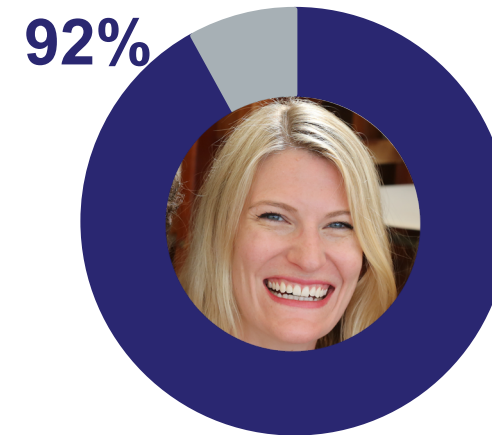
Overall sample = **3 in 4**



**Boomer Bill**



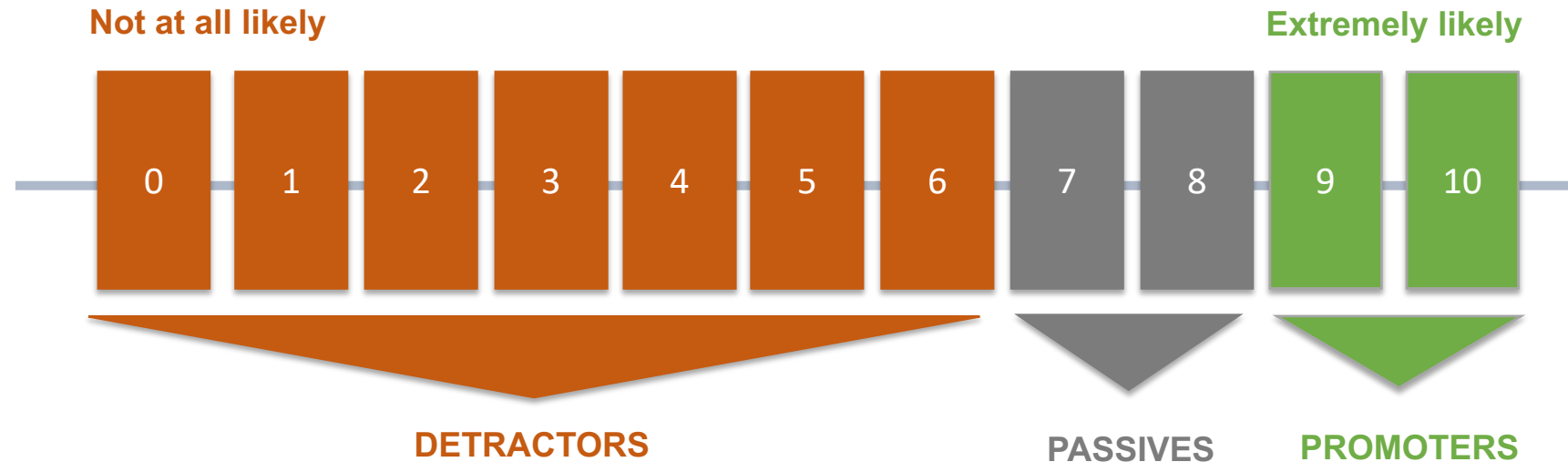
**X-er Eric**



**Millennial Liz**

# Net Promoter® Survey Methodology

How likely are you to recommend our firm to a friend or colleague?



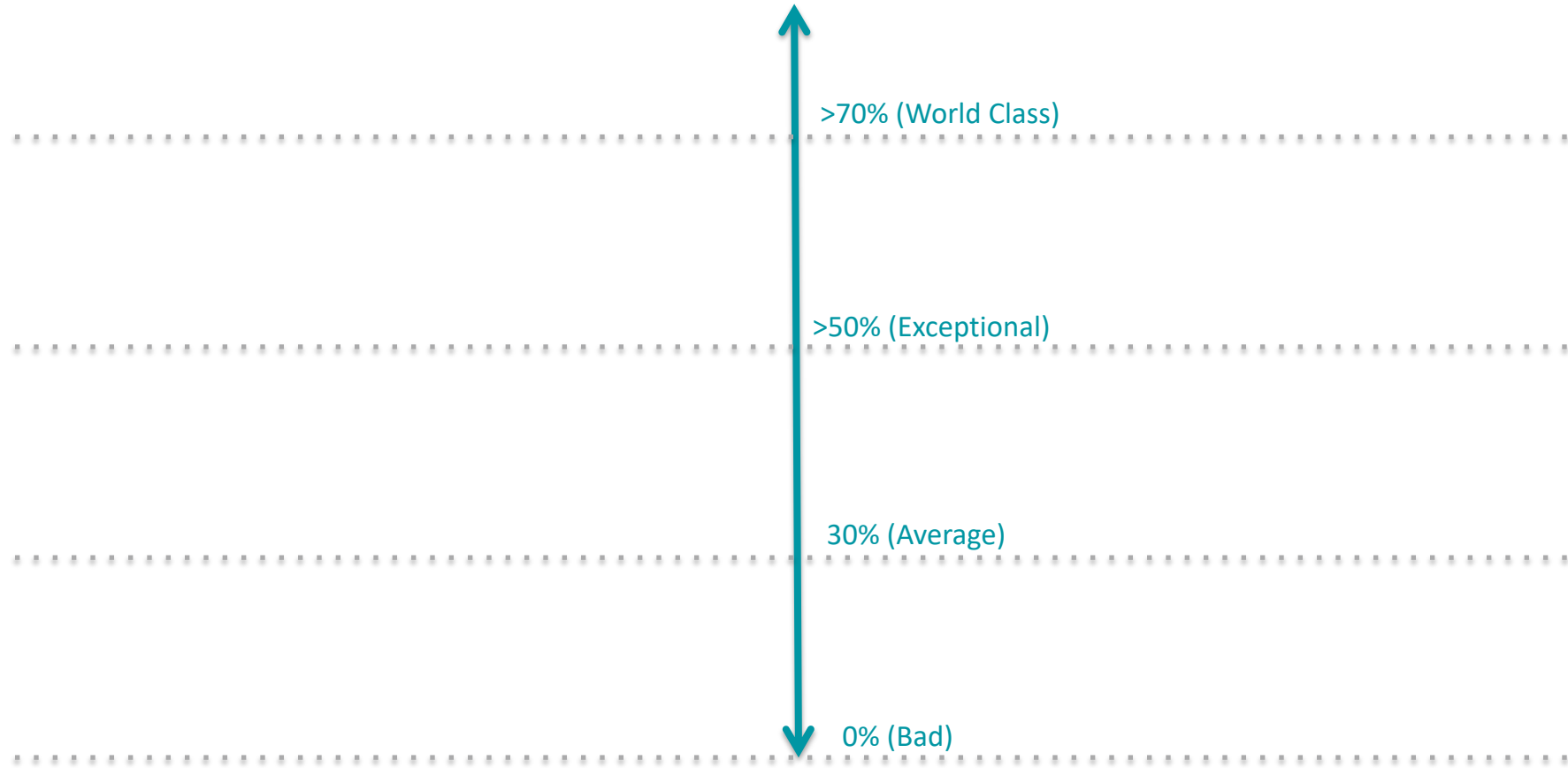
$$\text{Net Promoter® Score} = \% \text{ Promoters} - \% \text{ Detractors}$$

## Why Net Promoter® Score?

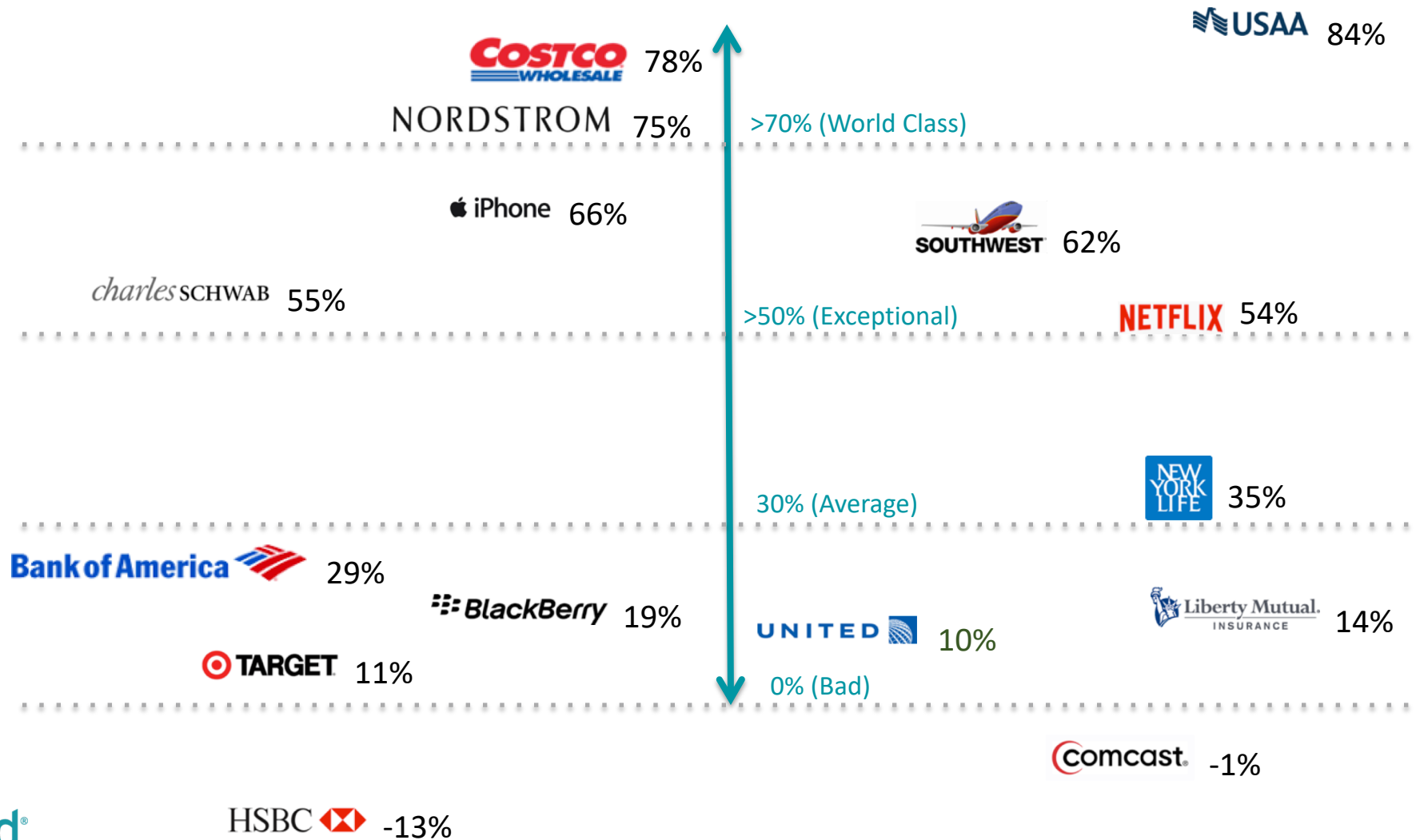
- Directly tied to growth strategy for service firms - **referrability**.
- Single metric to **benchmark** against the industry and across other world-class service organizations.



# Global NPS Standards



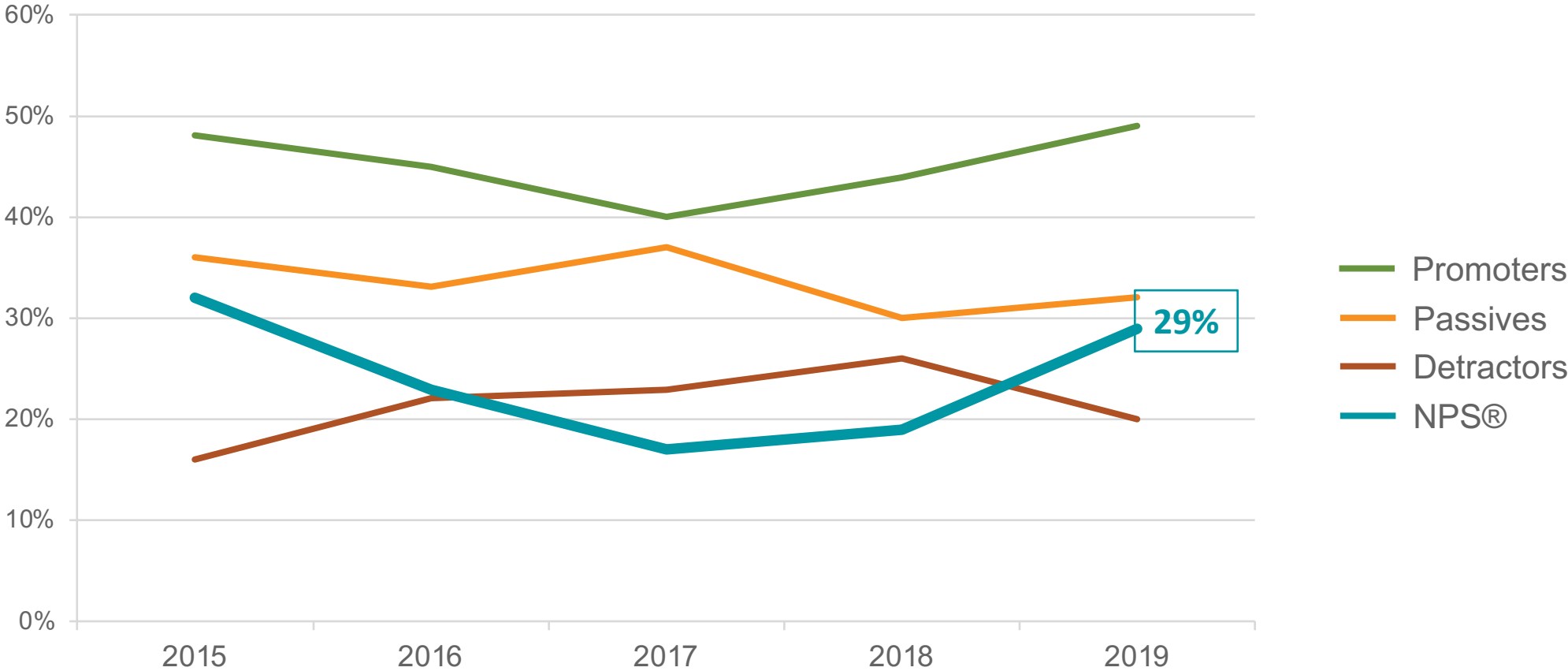
# NPS Across Industries



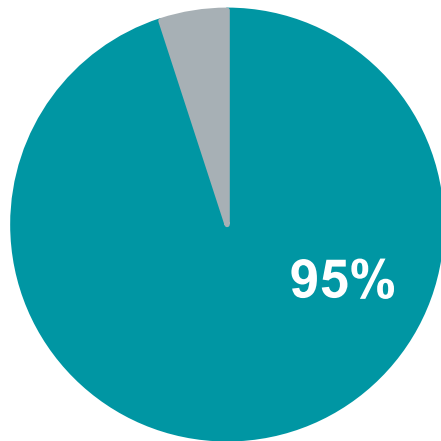
## Why Net Promoter® Score?

- Directly tied to growth strategy for service firms - **referrability**.
- Single metric to **benchmark** against the industry and across other world-class service organizations.
- Creates service **awareness** and makes service quality an **accessible** goal across the organization.
- Measures **loyalty behavior as a proxy for client perception** – helps the client remove their own bias about what constitutes “good” or “great” service.

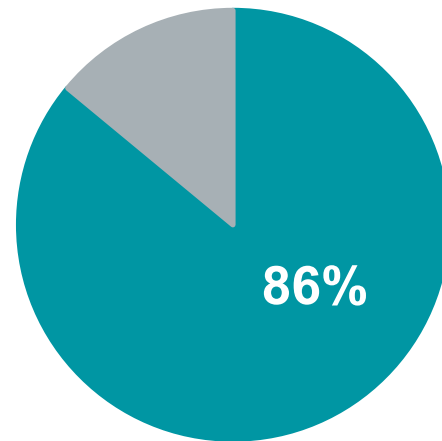
# Legal Industry NPS® Benchmark



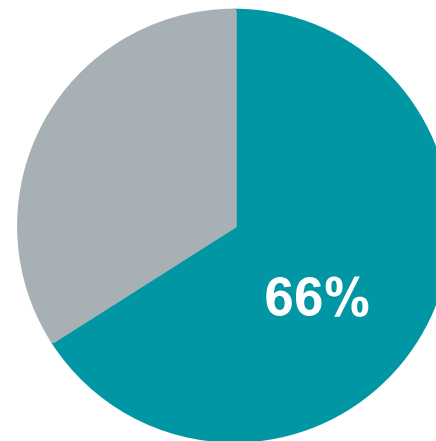
# Clients are ready to be asked about their experience.



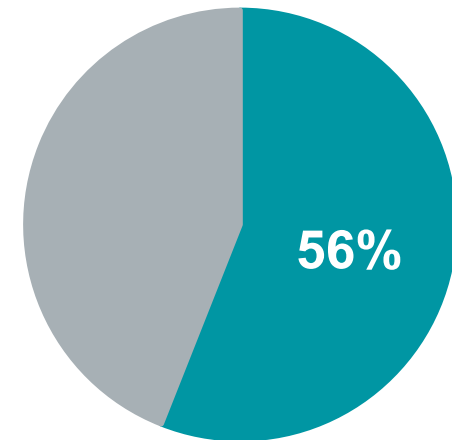
95% of law firm clients say it's important to have an open channel of communication to provide feedback to their firm.



86% say that when asked for feedback, their perception of their law firm is positively impacted.



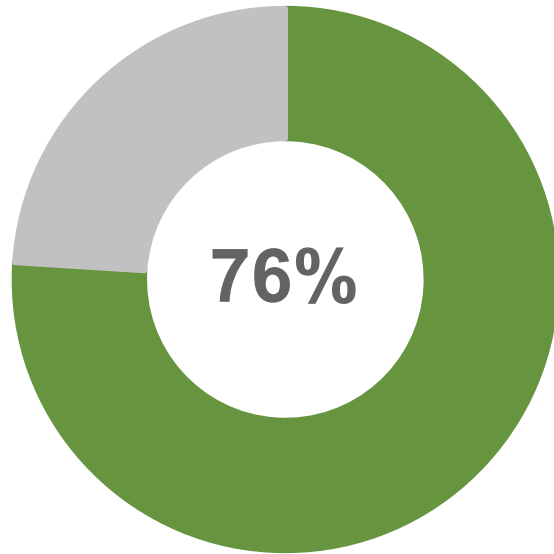
66% of legal clients say they are more likely to take the time to provide feedback through a survey than in-person.



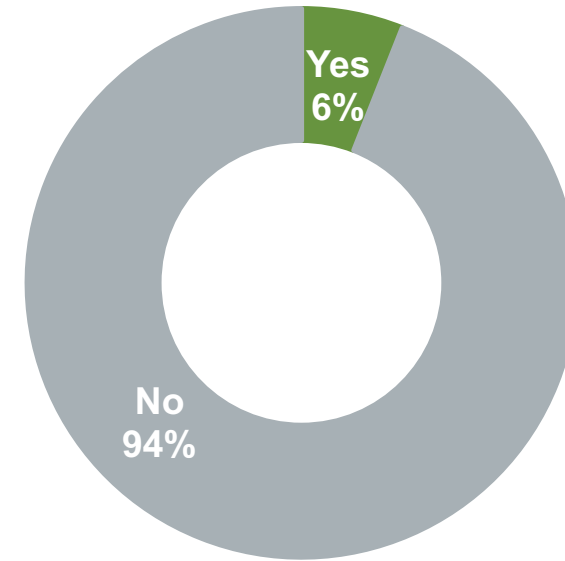
56% of legal clients say they are more likely to be candid with their feedback in an online survey than in-person.

# #1: Measure “referrability” of your firm and lawyers. (maybe even ask for a referral or two?)

% of clients who would consider a new law firm that was recommended to them



“Has your primary law firm asked you for a referral in the past year?”

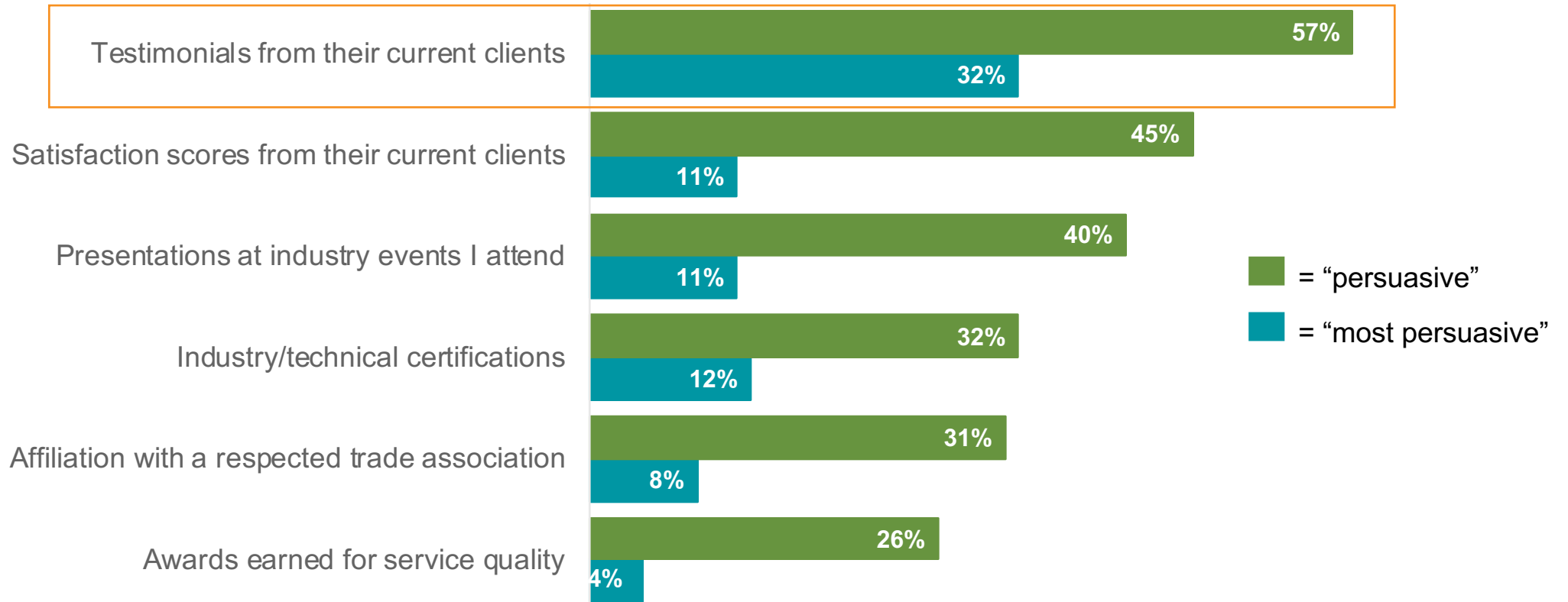


# So, what can you do?

- #1** Measure the referrability of your firm and practitioners.
- #2** Capture – and utilize – testimonials as much as humanly possible.

## #2: Capture – and utilize – testimonials as much as possible.

Best ways for a law firm to demonstrate they have industry expertise





## #2: Capture – and utilize – testimonials as much as possible.

More than 8 in 10 law firm clients would be willing to share a testimonial.



But fewer than 2 in 10 have been asked to do so.



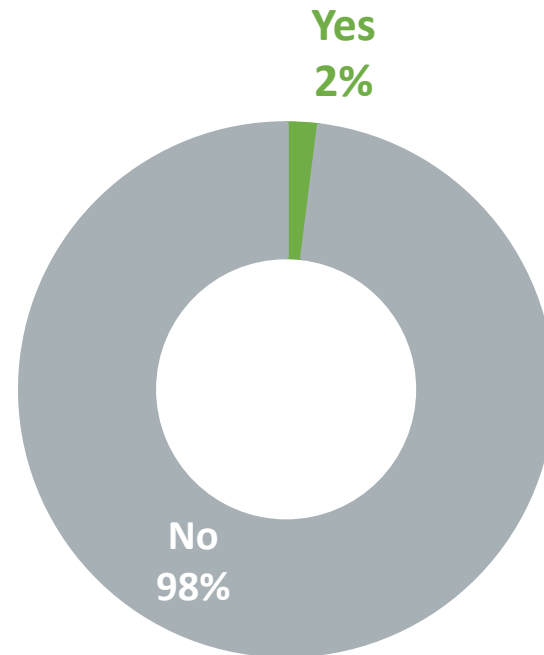
## #2: Capture – and utilize – testimonials as much as possible. (know who to ask)

**Promoters** of their  
primary law firm are  
**13x more likely**  
to provide a testimonial.



## #2: Capture – and utilize – testimonials as much as possible. (know who to ask)

% of in-house counsel that have been asked for a testimonial

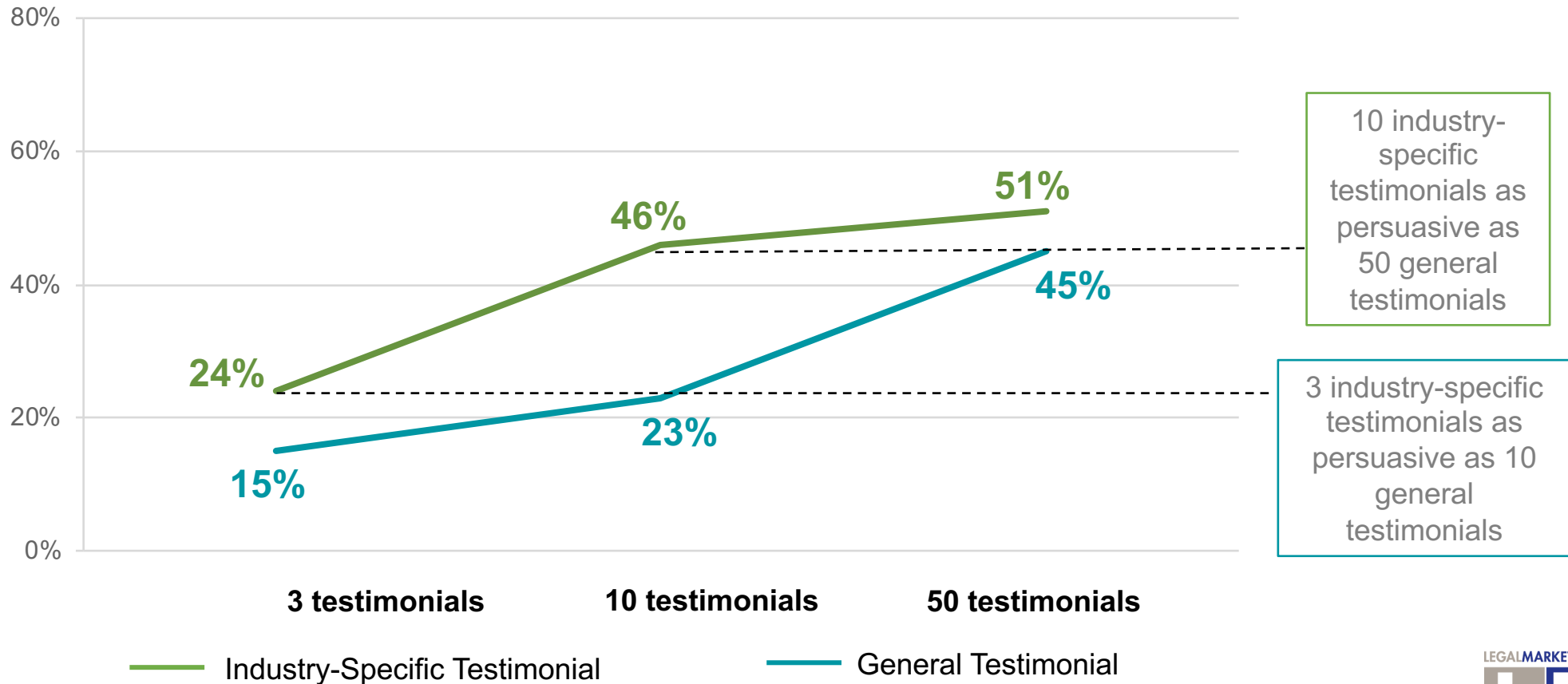


**69%**

Of those **not** asked would be likely to share one if asked

# #2: Capture – and utilize – testimonials as much as possible. (quantity and quality both matter)

% of Prospects 'Much More Likely' to Consider Firm



# So, what can you do?

- #1** Measure the referrability of your firm and practitioners.
- #2** Capture – and utilize – testimonials as much as humanly possible.
- #3** Actively build your firm’s online reputation.

# #3: Actively build your firm's online reputation. (you really can't afford to ignore it)

## 1999:

- Don't get into a car with strangers.
- Don't meet up with people from the internet.
- Don't let someone you don't know into your home.
- Don't trust the advice of strangers.

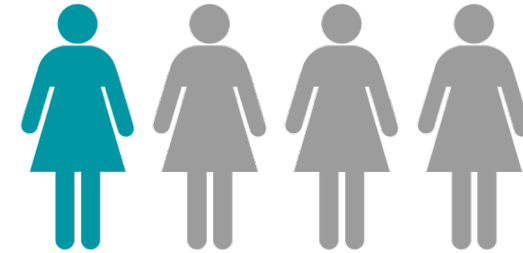


## 2019:

- Literally summon strangers from the internet and get into their car.
- Pay money to stay in the home of someone you've never met.
- **Only** trust the advice of strangers.

### #3: Actively build your firm's online reputation.

Nearly **1 in 4** legal buyers say that online ratings / reviews are a credible way for law firms to prove industry expertise.



#### ONLINE RATINGS + REVIEWS MORE PERSUASIVE THAN:



Webinars



White papers



Blog posts



**Doesn't mean you should stop doing these things!**

Consider the relative investment and whether you're paying enough attention to online reputation.

## #3: Actively build your firm's online reputation.

When it comes to proving the quality of your firm, legal buyers find online ratings + reviews:

**2x** as trustworthy as your firm's website

**3x** as trustworthy as other marketing & advertising

SOURCE: ClearlyRated 2019



## #3: Actively build your firm's online reputation.

(negative reviews have >2x the impact on buyer consideration)

**7** = The number of negative online reviews that will disqualify your firm from a buyer's decision set.

**VS.**

**19** = The number of positive online reviews your company must have for a buyer to add you to their decision set.

## #3: Actively build your firm's online reputation. (so much more to say, so little time)



- Identify the online rating sites that will have the greatest impact on the buyer. (**HINT:** Google is a good place to start)
- Proactively ask Promoters to leave you a review there. (they are 62% more likely to take action on this request!)
- Remember that negative reviews have 2x the impact. (i.e. don't wait until you're surprised)
- The foundation is knowing how your clients feel about you, and working to build an online reputation that reflects that.

# So, what can you do?

- #1** Measure the referrability of your firm and practitioners.
- #2** Capture – and utilize – testimonials as much as humanly possible.
- #3** Actively build your firm’s online reputation.
- #4** Build a strategy for reaching and winning business with millennials.

## #4: Build a strategy for reaching and winning business with millennials.



**Millennial Liz**

- Nearly **7x more likely** to start her law firm search online compared to Boomer Bill, and more than **2x more likely** to start online than X-er Eric.
- Nearly **2x more likely** to want to talk to you at the start of her buyer journey compared to X-er Eric. **½ as likely** to want to wait until the end compared to Boomer Bill.
- Cares more about cost, less about service quality and industry expertise.
- More likely to find what say you about yourself to be credible and persuasive.
- **½ as likely** to be fully committed to her primary firm, **59% more likely** to consider a new firm that is referred to them (compared to Boomer Bill).

SOURCE: ClearlyRated 2019

## #4: Build a strategy for reaching and winning business with millennials.



**Millennial Liz**



- Maximize online presence and thought leadership.
- Educate & enrich. Make your buyer smarter, help make up for lack of experience.
- Identify price sensitivity and educate. Supplement with VOC content.

# So, what can you do?

- #1** Measure the referrability of your firm and practitioners.
- #2** Capture – and utilize – testimonials as much as humanly possible.
- #3** Actively build your firm’s online reputation.
- #4** Build a strategy for educating and winning business with millennials.
- #5** Lead the charge in your organization to prioritize the client experience.

# #5: Lead the charge in your organization to prioritize the client experience. (it will bring a tangible ROI)

*Compared to Detractors, Promoters of their primary law firm are...*

*More committed to only using their current primary law firm*

**46%**

more likely to be fully committed

*Less likely to plan a decrease in annual spend with their primary law firm*

**3.2x**

less likely to decrease spend

*More likely to provide a testimonial for their primary law firm*

**13x**

"very likely" to provide a testimonial

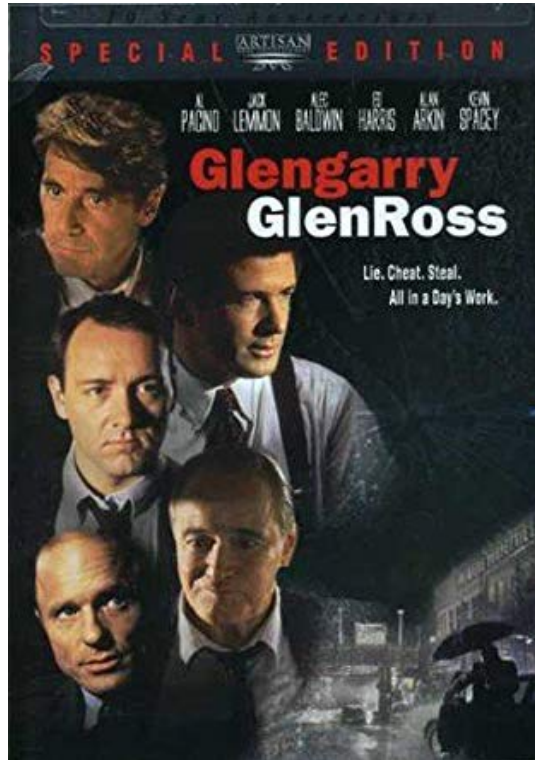
*More likely to share an online, public review for their primary law firm, if asked*

**62%**

more likely to provide an online review

SOURCE: ClearlyRated 2019

**#5:** Lead the charge in your organization to prioritize the client experience.  
(it makes your life better)

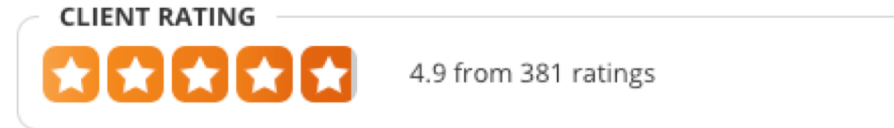


← (not a millennial-friendly reference)

Guess what's more fun than selling for the sake of selling, to meet a quota, or to not get fired?



## #5: Lead the charge in your organization to prioritize the client experience. (it makes your life better)



*“Since 2016, Stern Cohen LLP has been proud to work with ClearlyRated and their Net Promoter Score survey program. ClearlyRated provides an essential service in a very competitive industry. Our firm has greatly benefited from an excellent return on our investment!”*

*“Good and simple way to measure our NPS on client satisfaction.”*

*“Execution is amazing!”*

*“Easy to prepare; customer service is phenomenal; see results immediately in an easy to use portal.”*

*“The personal service, quick response time, and the product itself make it easy to recommend ClearlyRated to other law firms in need of a client survey solution.”*

# #5: Lead the charge in your organization to prioritize the client experience. (it makes your life better)

CLIENT RATING

Exceptional Customer Service

Zita and the team did a great job getting our award transferred over with minimal change. We appreciate you very much!



...answer questions, no matter how basic, and did so with great enthusiasm and support. I never doubted being able to get a quick answer. She provided outstanding customer service.

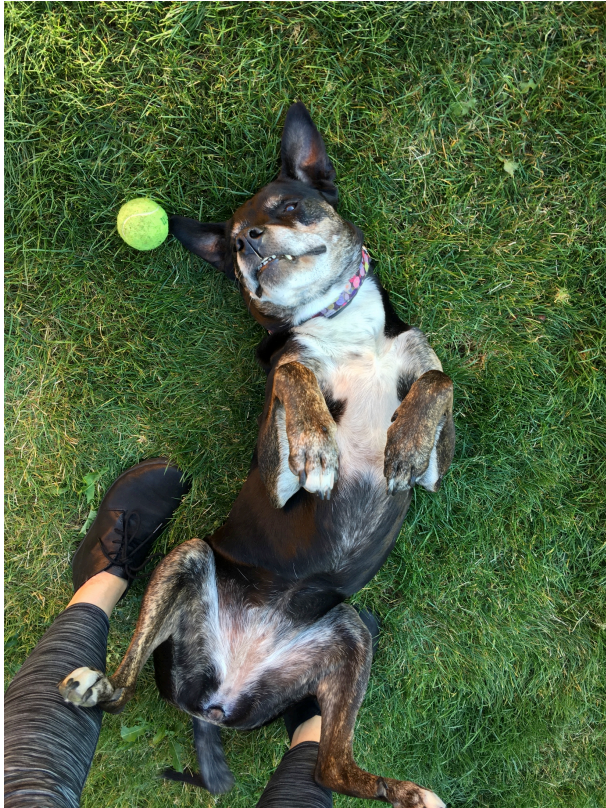
...partners around!

**#5:** Lead the charge in your organization to prioritize the client experience.  
(it's the final frontier of differentiation)



*“You can find a great lawyer anywhere. If you’re looking for a competitive advantage – the client experience is it.”*

- Ed Bodensiek



# Thank You!

[kat.kocurek@clearlyrated.com](mailto:kat.kocurek@clearlyrated.com)

[linkedin.com/in/katkocurek](https://www.linkedin.com/in/katkocurek)