

# HOW ATTORNEYS VIEW THEIR MARKETING EFFORTS

A study of attorney priorities and difficulties when marketing a law firm.



Martindale-Avvo™

## RESEARCH SUMMARY AND GOALS

The goal of this research was to answer the following questions:

- How effective do attorneys feel they are at marketing?
- How difficult are marketing-related activities?
- What do they feel is important for attracting customers?

We surveyed 350 attorneys during the fourth quarter of 2020 to get their thoughts on the above.

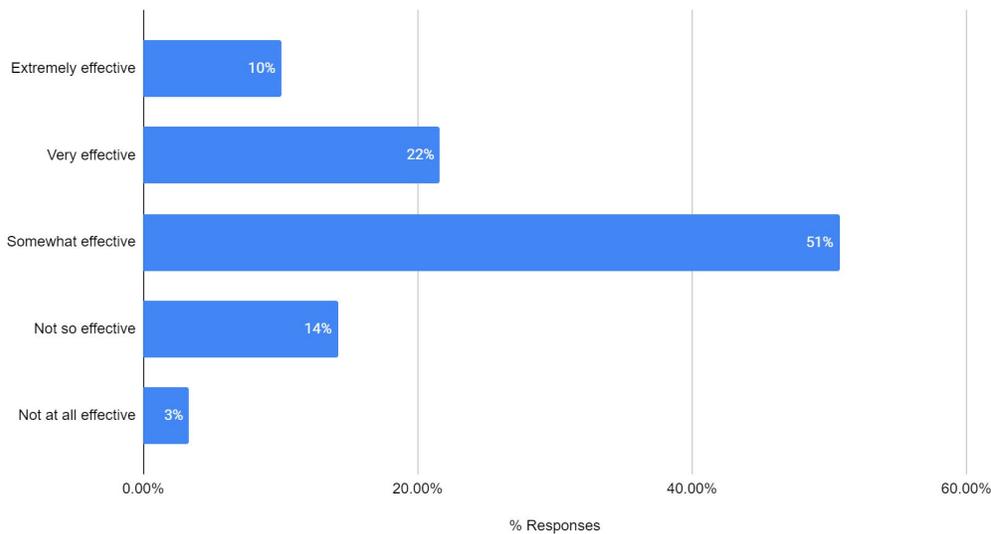
Surveyed attorneys came from a variety of firm sizes, most commonly solo or small-mid firm practitioners. Attorneys who worked at a firm with 25+ other attorneys represented 6.6% of surveyed attorneys.

A wide range of practices were represented, with the most common being Estate Planning. Other common practice areas included Business, Lawsuits & Disputes, Real Estate, and Family.

## EFFECTIVENESS OF CUSTOMER ACQUISITION EFFORTS

Most attorneys (51%) reported that they felt their current efforts to acquire new customers were “somewhat effective.” Of the remainder, just under a third felt their efforts were more effective, with 10% even saying they were “extremely effective.” The remaining attorneys felt their efforts were less effective, with around 3% feeling their current efforts weren’t effective at all.

How effective do you feel your overall efforts on customer acquisition are?



# MAIN DIFFICULTIES WITH FIRM GROWTH AND CLIENT ACQUISITION

When asked what their main challenge related to firm growth and client acquisition was, the attorneys we surveyed provided us with a variety of answers. We observed four major themes within these responses:

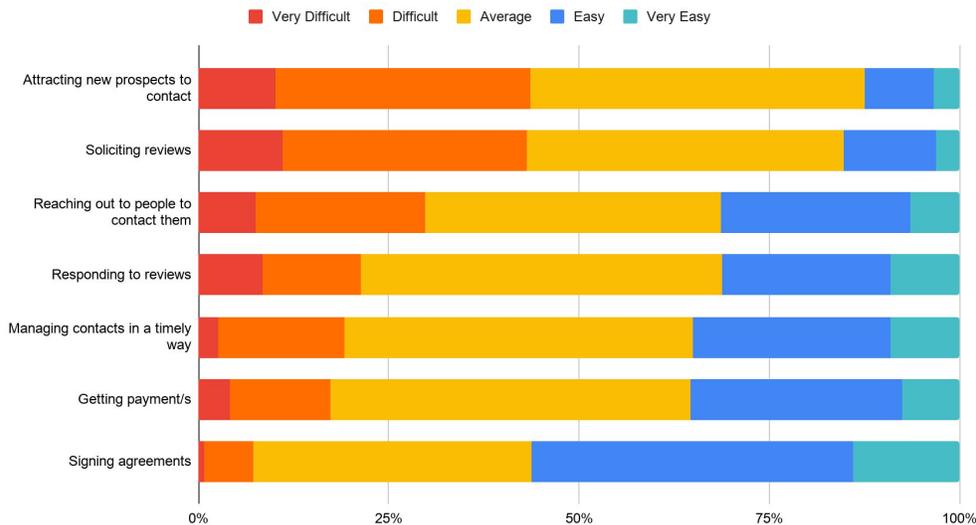
1. Lack of time to spend promoting one's business
2. Cost of advertising and marketing one's business
3. Difficulty finding good clients
4. Difficulty finding and hiring good employees

One of the common threads within these larger themes was that many attorneys were too busy to devote extensive amounts of time to such efforts, and this made a number of activities more difficult than they might otherwise be.

# DIFFICULTY OF SELECTED TASKS INVOLVED IN THE PRACTICE OF LAW

We asked the attorneys we surveyed to rate a number of tasks in terms of how easy or difficult they were to perform. “Attracting new prospects to contact” and “soliciting reviews” were found to be the most difficult tasks overall, with less than 20% of attorneys finding either task to be easy and over 40% finding them difficult. Reaching out to people to contact them and responding to reviews were also found to be particularly challenging.

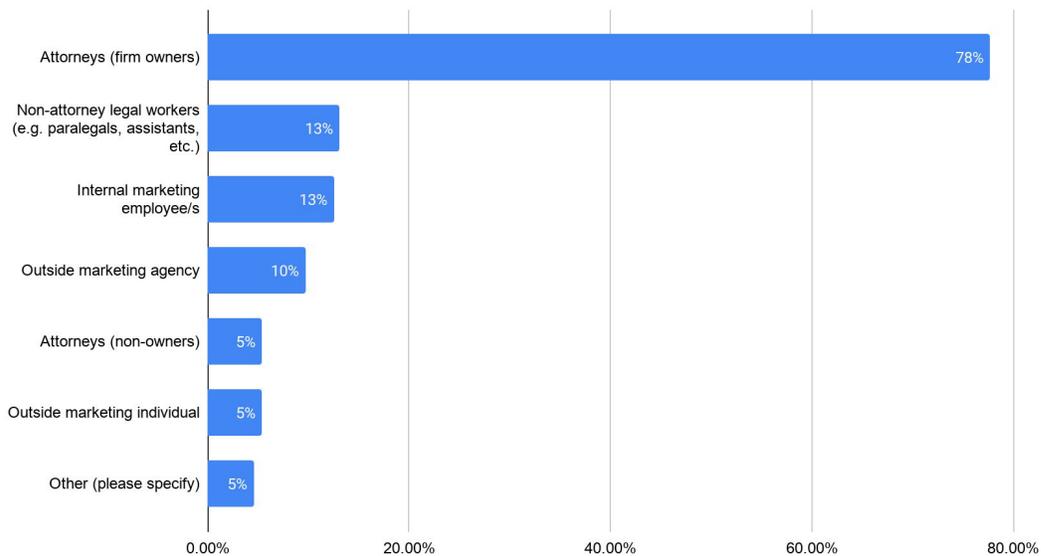
How would you rate the following tasks in terms of difficulty?



# MARKETING RESPONSIBILITY AND DECISION MAKING

Surveyed attorneys generally reported that day-to-day marketing was handled by attorneys who had ownership of the firm either in full or in part. Fully 77.7% reported operating in this manner. The next most common responses included non-attorney legal workers, internal marketing employees, and outside marketing agencies. Solo attorneys were less likely to have access to these resources than larger firms.

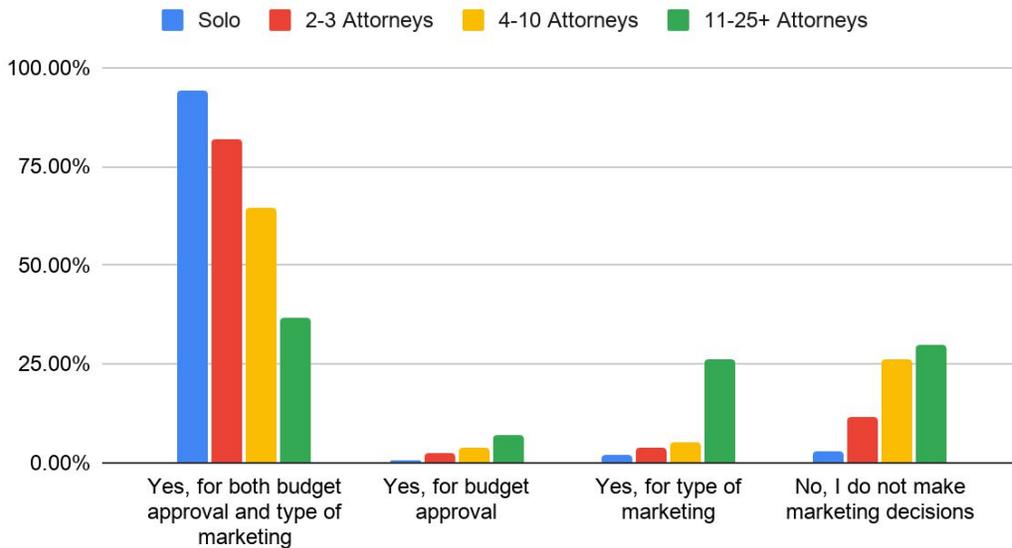
Who handles the day-to-day of marketing at your firm? (Select all that apply)



# PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR MARKETING DECISIONS

As the size of a firm increased, the likelihood that a surveyed attorney would have personal responsibility for all marketing decisions decreased. Larger firms were more likely to delegate responsibility for the *type* of marketing, but less likely to do the same for the *budget* of marketing.

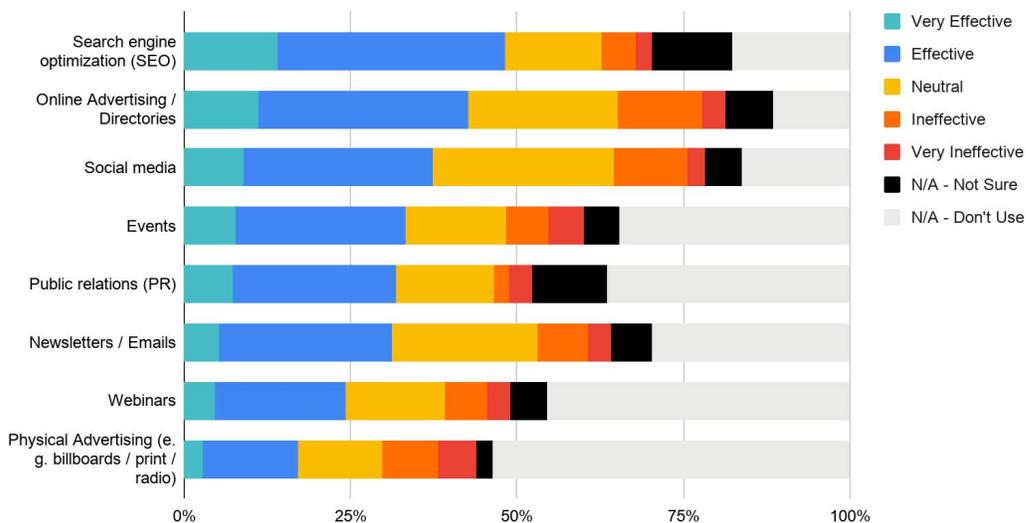
Do you make marketing decisions at your firm?



# EFFECTIVENESS OF DIFFERENT MARKETING CHANNELS

Both usage and perceived effectiveness of marketing channels varied. Search engine optimization (SEO) was viewed as the most effective in relation to marketing efforts, while online advertising & directories had the greatest number of users. Physical advertising was both viewed as the least effective, as well as having the fewest number of users.

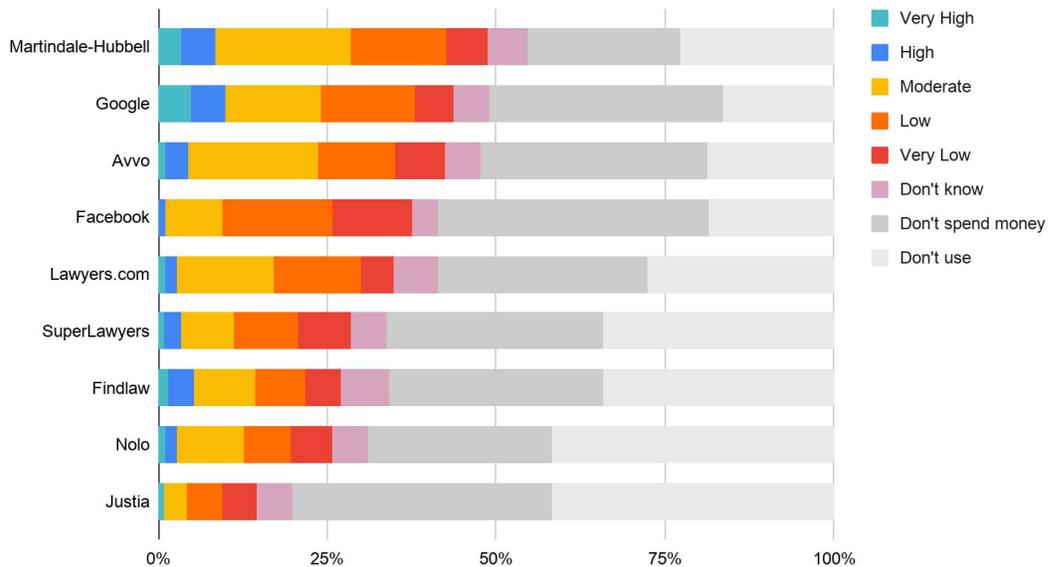
How effective do you / your firm find the following marketing channels? (select N/A for channels you do not use)



# BREAKDOWN OF SPEND ACROSS DIFFERENT PROVIDERS

The attorneys we surveyed often reported using multiple providers, though not all attorneys who used a provider spent money on it. Among surveyed attorneys, Martindale-Hubbell had the highest number of paying users. Meanwhile, Google had the highest self-reported rate of spend among paying users, and Facebook the highest number of non-paying users.

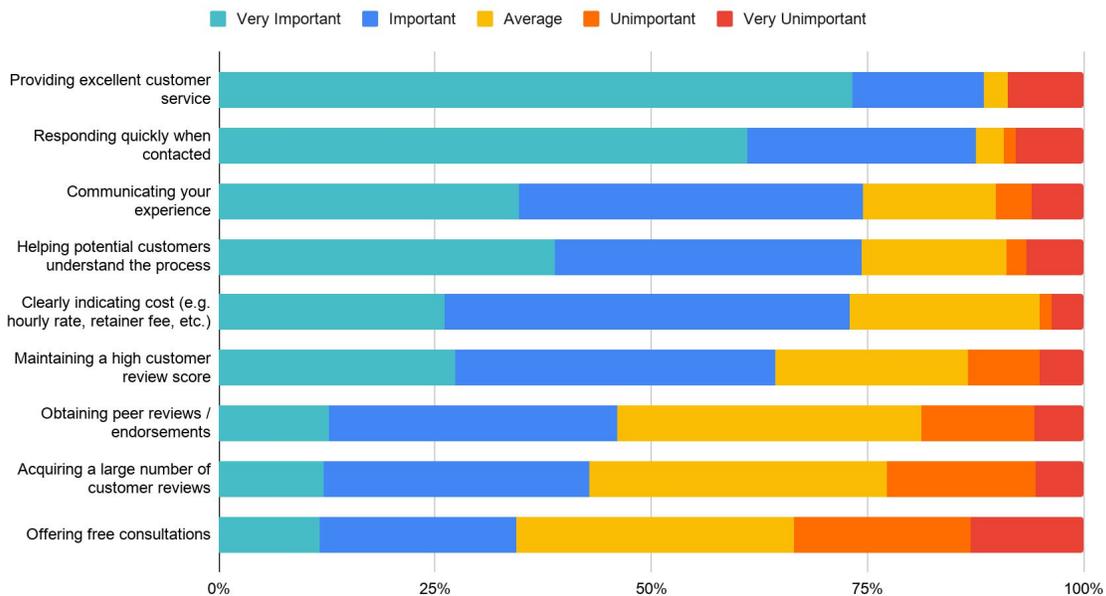
How would you describe your financial investment with each of these providers?



# IMPORTANCE OF VARIOUS ACTIONS IN ATTRACTING NEW CUSTOMERS

Customer service topped the list. Over 85% of surveyed attorneys felt having excellent customer service and a quick response time were “important” or “very important” in attracting new customers. Other valued factors included communicating experience, helping customers understand the process, indicating potential costs, and maintaining a high review score.

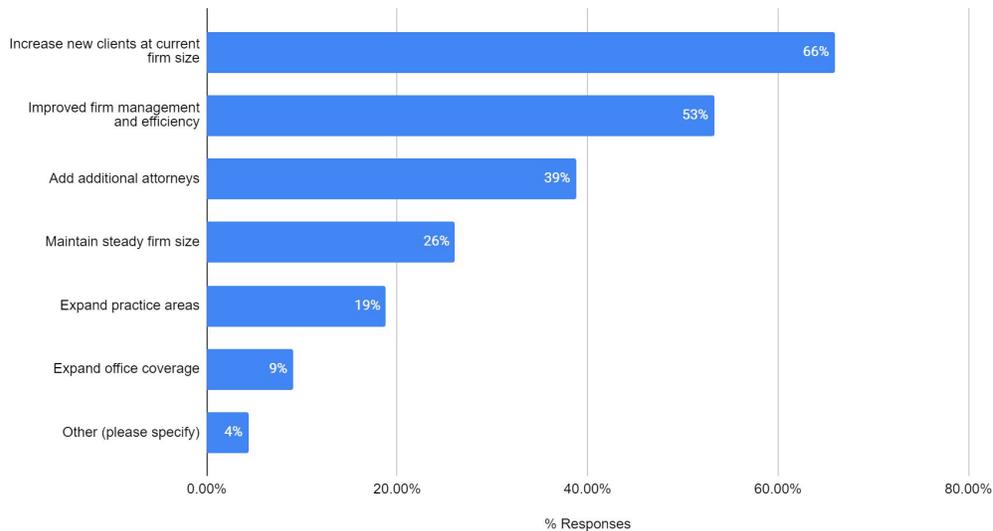
How important would you say the following actions are for attracting new customers?



## SUMMARY OF FUTURE (1-2 YEAR) BUSINESS GOALS

Nearly two-thirds of attorneys who responded said one of their future business goals was to increase new clients while maintaining their current firm size. We also saw 53% say that wanted to improve management and efficiency at their firm. While almost 40% of attorneys wanted more attorneys at their firm, fewer wanted to expand their offices or practice areas. Notably, the larger the firm, the more likely they were to want to expand, and vice versa.

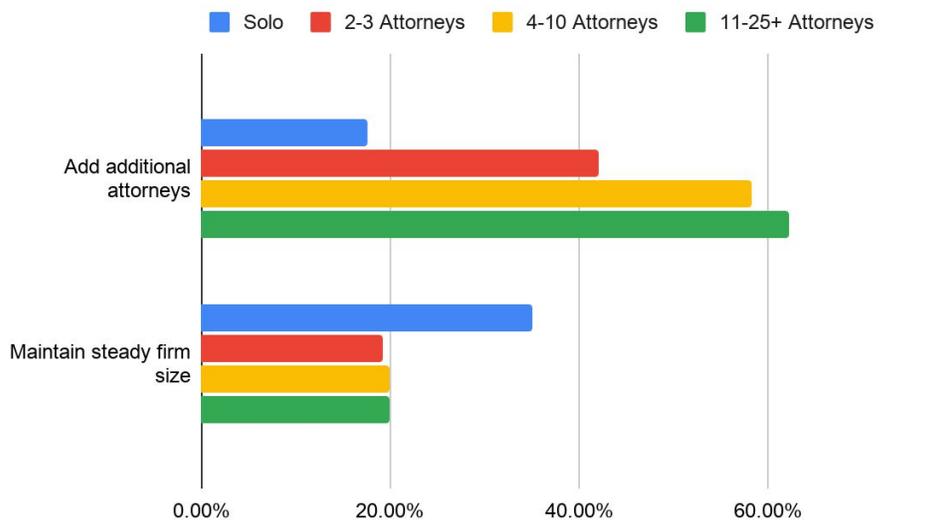
What are your firm's future (1-2 years) business goals? (Select all that apply)



## DIFFERENCES BY FIRM SIZE ON FUTURE (1-2 YEAR) BUSINESS GOALS

The most noticeable differences between different firms were related to naming “add additional attorneys” or “maintain steady firm size” as a business goal. Smaller firms were noticeably less likely to want to add more attorneys, but the desire for this increased as firm size grew. Similarly, the desire to maintain a steady firm size was more common among solo practitioners than any other type of firm.

Future Business Goals (1-2 years)



## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

### **Experiences with Growing and Marketing a Firm:**

Most attorneys feel that their efforts to acquire new customers are moderately successful, but that there's room to improve further. Some of the main struggles related to growing and marketing a firm included:

1. Finding time to promote one's business
2. The cost of marketing and advertising
3. Finding good clients
4. Finding and hiring good employees.

Soliciting reviews from clients was also found to be a challenging task.

### **Attorney Involvement in Marketing Activities:**

While a number of attorneys reported involvement in marketing activities, most commonly this task was handled by firm owners. Larger firms were more likely to have attorneys who were not involved in marketing, as well as access to other resources like non-attorney staff members.

### **Attitudes about Marketing:**

Online marketing had some of the highest involvement while also being rated highly. Conversely, traditional physical advertising was seen as lagging behind other methods.

### **Goals:**

Business goals for the next 12 months most often focused on making one's business run better by improving existing processes. Solo practitioners were notably less likely to desire expansion than larger firms, who tended to be more likely to want to expand their firm further.