



How to Increase Your Firm's Visibility and Get More Clients

BY SYLVIA MONTGOMERY, CPSM

Raise your hand if this sounds familiar: You're proud of the quality of services your firm offers. You have a solid circle of clients and enjoy consistent positive feedback. Many of your clients have become repeat clients and business is good ... but you just can't shake the feeling that it could be better.

If the above rings true, your firm might be suffering from a lack of visibility in your marketplace. You've done the work of establishing your reputation within your circle of clients—the next step is to effectively communicate your value to prospects and use your already established reputation to create opportunities for referrals. By increasing your firm's visibility, you can further develop your brand and become more competitive in your marketplace.

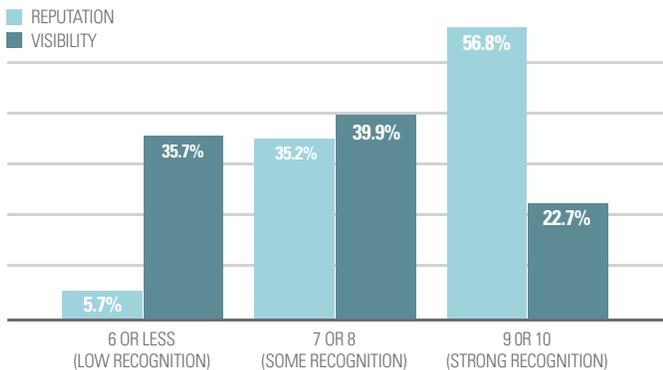
Defining Your Brand

You might have a great reputation within your market, but if you're interested in competing on a larger scale, you need a brand that matches your goals. When defining your brand, consider this:

BRAND = REPUTATION × VISIBILITY

This may seem simple at first, but many firms struggle to achieve both qualities of a fully developed brand. In Hinge's book, *Inside the Buyer's Brain*, we found lack of visibility to be a common problem among professional services firms. While nearly 60 percent of buyers interviewed confirmed their vendors had a strong reputation, only 23 percent considered them well known.

THE IMPACT OF RESEARCH ON FIRM GROWTH AND PROFITABILITY:



In order to have a strong brand, your firm needs both a strong reputation and high visibility. The combination helps to create opportunities for new client relationships, while still maintaining your relationships with current clients.

Now, making your firm more visible doesn't mean you should blindly increase marketing efforts (i.e., advertising and sponsorships) and haphazardly approach new target audiences—far from it. The visibility of your brand refers to communicating the value of your services so current and prospective clients have a clear awareness of what you have to offer.



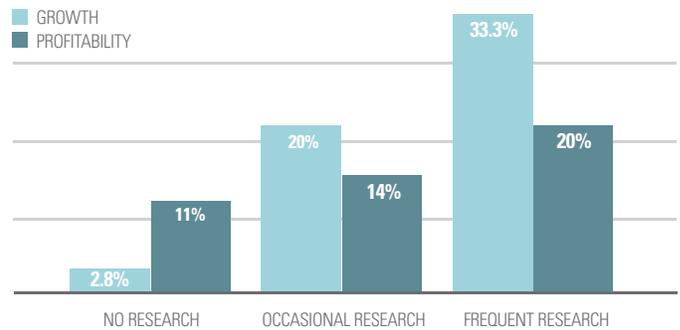
Three Steps to Increase Your Firm's Visibility and Attract New Clients

STEP ONE: DO YOUR RESEARCH

To understand how to effectively position your firm's solutions, you need a firm grasp on your buyers' needs. Conducting consistent and thorough research on who your buyers are and what their biggest concerns are prepares your firm to communicate your value effectively. This research is not project research, but rather perception research.

Plus, doing research on your clients pays off. Firms that do frequent research experienced higher growth and profitability than firms who conducted seldom or no research on their target clients.

BUYERS' RATINGS OF SELLERS' REPUTATION AND VISIBILITY:



So, what kind of insight can in-depth client research provide? In short, real objectivity.

- **Who your clients are.** This knowledge can help your firm divide your buyers into different personas so your marketing can target specific needs and demographics.
- **What your clients struggle with.** Your firm provides services that address your clients' key challenges. Knowing those problems—and how they evolve over time—is essential to keeping your services relevant and marketing them as solutions.
- **What your clients understand about your firm.** The perspective your clients have on your firm helps you know if you're communicating your value and message effectively.
- **Who your clients view as your competition.** Knowing the other firms your clients are considering can help you figure out your firm's unique value proposition.

STEP TWO: EMBRACE CONTENT MARKETING

One of the best ways to demonstrate your firm's value and message is by creating quality content that targets your clients' concerns. The simplest way to get started with content marketing is to create

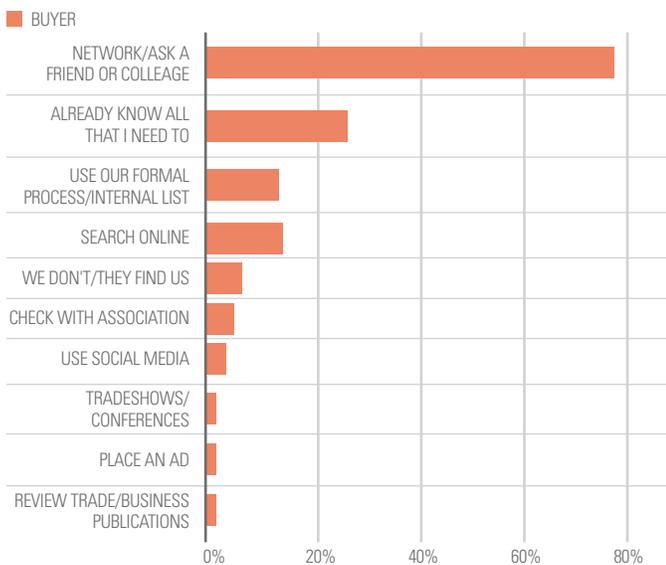
a blog. And update it. Frequently. Your posts should aim to educate your clients and establish the authority of your firm as a resource.

Additional content vehicles might be e-books, videos, infographics, Webinars, white papers, or newsletters. While some content should remain free, higher-quality content—like e-books or Webinars—can be accessed through the exchange of information. By asking prospective clients to provide their name and email address in exchange for premium content, your firm can acquire a list of high-quality leads to nurture.

So, how does content marketing help develop your brand?

- By providing prospective clients with relevant and educational information, your firm positions itself as an authority in your field. This helps establish your reputation.
- The second most popular method through which buyers find potential service providers—after the old standby of asking a friend or colleague for a recommendation—is searching online. Content marketing can help increase your firm’s online presence, furthering your visibility and solidifying your brand.

HOW BUYERS SEARCH FOR A NEW PROFESSIONAL SERVICES FIRM:



STEP THREE: CAPITALIZE ON REFERRAL POTENTIAL

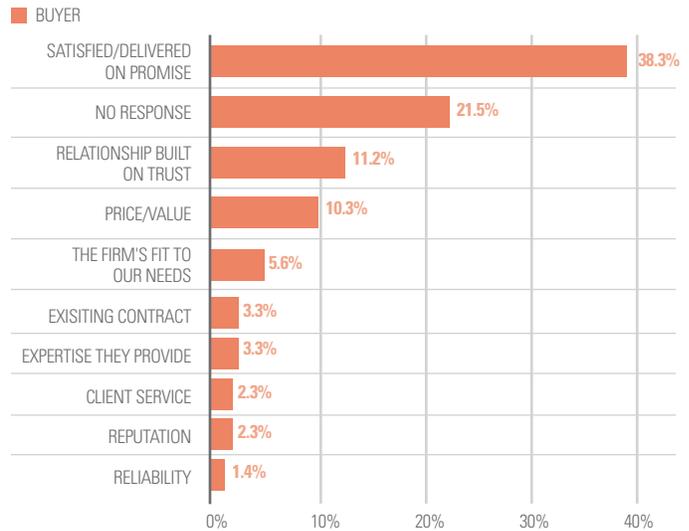
If your firm is focusing on acquiring new clients, you might not have to look any further than your current client relationships. The stronger your brand, the more likely your clients will recommend your services.

Since referral recommendations are one of the most common methods that buyers use to find potential service providers, maintaining current customer relationships is essential to getting new clients. This means cultivating buyer loyalty is crucial even after you’ve already closed the sale.

So, how can you encourage your clients to become referral advocates?

- Build buyer loyalty by following through on your promises. The more time you can get a client to invest in your relationship, the more confident they’ll be in recommending your firm to a friend. Of all the various factors influencing buyer loyalty, the ability to deliver on promises ranked first in our research.

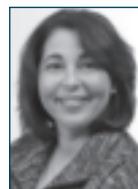
FACTORS INFLUENCING LOYALTY:



- Don’t stop researching your clients’ needs simply because you’ve already closed the sale. Their needs will continue to evolve and your marketing efforts need to reflect their transition. This will help keep your clients satisfied and make them more willing to refer your firm.
- Ask. It might sound simple, but it’s the reason that 72 percent of buyers gave for not referring. Let your clients know that you would appreciate a referral and make them feel valued by featuring them in case studies or on a client list on your web site.

The gap between reputation and visibility presents a unique opportunity for professional services firms to out-market the competition. Taking steps to increase your visibility and further establish your brand can position your firm to attract more clients and succeed in a larger marketplace. [\[1\]](#)

About the Author



Sylvia Montgomery, CPSM, a senior partner at Hinge, brings more than 20 years of experience and perspective to the Hinge team. She has co-authored two acclaimed books on marketing and business and has served as an adjunct professor at several universities. Montgomery is a frequent contributor to *Marketer*; her most recent article in April 2014 explored how marketing

content can separate firms from the rest of the pack. Montgomery frequently speaks on topics related to marketing for professional services. Montgomery can be reached at smontgomery@hingemarketing.com or on Twitter @BrandStrong.