

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BTI Client Service A-Team 2025

Survey of Law Firm Client Service Performance



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Introduction

Client Service Demands Go Chaotic – Confounding Law Firms

Legal complexity isn't just a fact of life. Add volatility and unpredictable regulatory changes, and you get chaos.

It creates jolting changes in client needs and expectations – with no notice. This is no trend. It's life as a corporate counsel.

It's an evolutionary leap in business and law. It's irreversible, transformative, and already upending client demands and client-facing interactions. Nothing is as it was. There are currently 5 big consequences:

Legal Risk and Business Strategy Are Now the Same Beast

CEOs face challenges where legal and business issues are fully fused. No handoffs. No silos. Just one complex, fast-moving front.

CEOs want answers – now, not later. They demand real-time, strategic, practical advice. No theory. No fluff. They will pass on the legal memos. They want synthesis – fast, ready to act on strategic insight.

Corporate counsel – and law firms – are the support crew.

In-House Counsel Are Caught in the Squeeze

They're managing compressed timelines, rising risk, and relentless pressure from above. They need law firms to deliver – fast, smart, and ahead of the curve. And always changing.

Top Firms Are Thriving on the Chaos

The best firms aren't just advisors – they're embedded in client decision-making and navigating the chaos by:

- Injecting insight into client issues in real time
- Translating complexity into immediate action
- Making client counsel look brilliant in front of the CEO

They don't ask permission to charge premium rates. They earn them. Their superior value is clear and obvious.

Introduction

Sticking to an Older Model? That's Why Client Satisfaction Just Hit a 25-Year Low

Top-performing firms are adapting in real time. Others are still holding onto legacy models – waiting to be asked and losing out. Chaos can be a powerful force for positive change.

If you haven't embraced the chaos you haven't adapted – there isn't much time left.

Responsiveness Is Becoming Ice Age Behavior

- We've entered the era of anticipatory counsel.
- Top performing firms don't wait – they deliver insight before clients ever ask
- The reactive model is no longer enough

Channeling the Chaos – Integrating Client Service and Business Development

The old model is extinct. Client service used to feed business development. Now, they've fused – driven by CEO impatience, blurred boundaries, and sky-high expectations. Top firms didn't pivot. They jumped into managing the chaos. And their rates prove it.

200+ Firms Ranked

Named. Scored. And ranked solely by the clients who hire them.

Recalibrate client service. The future is already here.

BTI's Client Service A-Team 2025

Reveals the business development opportunities and coherent themes arising from the chaos – and the law firms mastering them. These new core themes include:

- Act with lightning speed
- Include clients early in strategy
- Field the absolute best team
- Make it easy to work with you
- Deliver ultra-practical, actionable recommendations

The BTI Client Service Trailblazers 2025

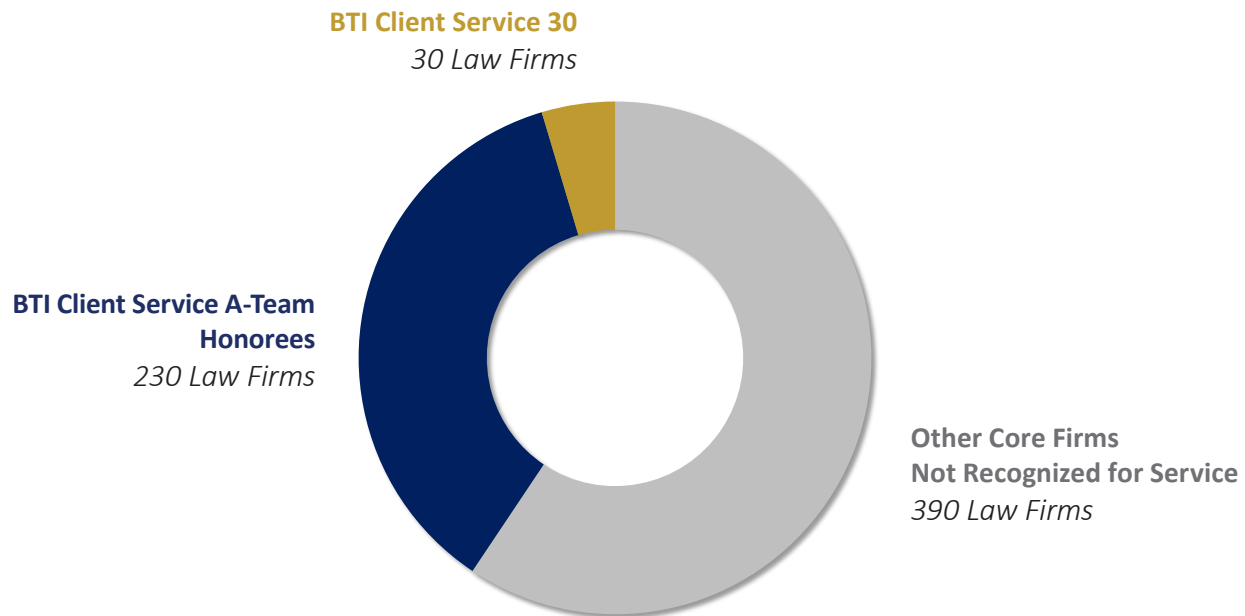
Clients single out only 55 trailblazing firms who are best at turning chaos into solutions for clients and new business for themselves. Learn what they do and who they are.

Please join us in congratulating the 55 BTI Client Service Trailblazers of 2025 on the following page.

The BTI Client Service A-Team Rankings

260 Law Firms Named by Corporate Counsel

According to BTI's research, 650 core law firms serve large and Fortune 1000 clients. However, only 260 law firms, are singled out – by name – by legal decision-makers for their prowess in at least 1 of the 17 activities driving the best client relationships.



The Best, the Strong, and the Missing in Action: Clients Rank Law Firm Client Service Performance

The BTI Client Service 30 performs 9 to 15 times better than all others. They account for less than 5% of all law firms competing for business at larger companies. We take a deeper dive into these top 30 firms beginning on page 26.

Clients recognize another 35.4% of law firms chasing the heels of the elite. This group is strong on key aspects of client service delivery and positioning itself to give the other firms a run for their money. We present the details of how these firms rank – both overall – and according to 17 activities driving client service.

Fully 60% of all law firms serving this market are missing in action. The increased client service volatility offers more opportunities for these firms to earn their way into the client service leadership groups.

The BTI 17 Activities Driving The Best Client Relationships

Powerful Insight into the 17 Activities Driving Client Development and the Best Client Relationships

BTI's exclusive, independent, one-on-one interviews and surveys with more than 30,000 corporate counsel and C-level executives reveal 17 specific and unique activities driving growth and client development. Of these 17 driving factors:

Clients see 6 activities as scarce, delivering strategic value – linking legal issues and business issues – and supporting the related decisions.

You and the firm's attorneys can draw on these primary activities to deliver the best client service and drive more business from existing clients, in good times or bad. These 6 decisive activities are:

- **Proving Your Commitment to Help** (*detailed implementation plans explained on page 71*)
- **Client Focus** (*detailed implementation plans explained on page 75*)
- **Providing Value for the Dollar** (*detailed implementation plans explained on page 84*)
- **Understanding the Client's Business** (*detailed implementation plans explained on page 79*)
- **Assess & Act Quickly** (*detailed implementation plans explained on page 67*)
- **Fields the Absolute Best Team** (*detailed implementation plans explained on page 87*)

And these go with the client service activities defining the Price of Admission, the minimum requirements for delivering excellent client service:

- Dealing with Unexpected Changes
- Excellent Quality Deliverables
- Keeping Clients Informed
- Handling the Inevitable Problems
- Legal Skills and Prowess
- Delivering on Core Scope

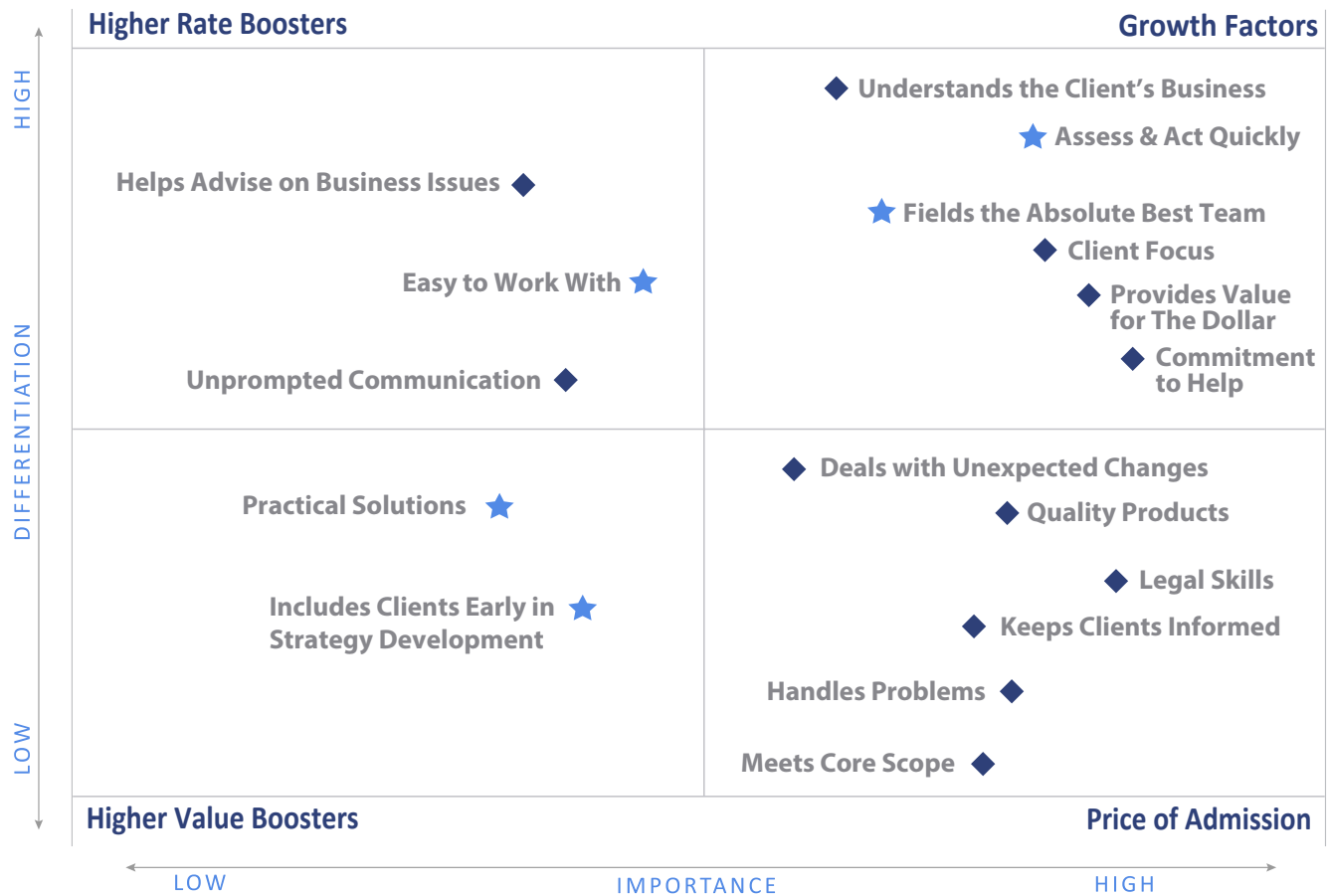
A savvy group of 260 law firms were able to deliver on client service expectations. These firms know how to help their clients and acted quickly – without being asked. Some were already best-in-class performers and others got a shot of client service adrenaline – they moved from very good to excellent.

The swirl of new regulations, political volatility, and workplace activism combined with peak management interest create the most compelling need for superior client service.

Clients continue to look to outside counsel more than ever. Look for the client service needs to change and evolve – but the best performers will have the best access to clients and be able to spot the new expectations first.

Clients rely on outside counsel more than ever. More reliance translates directly into higher value matters, more complexity. Clients now have the highest expectations of law firms they have ever had. And the market offers the highest rewards.

The BTI 17 Activities Driving The Best Client Relationships



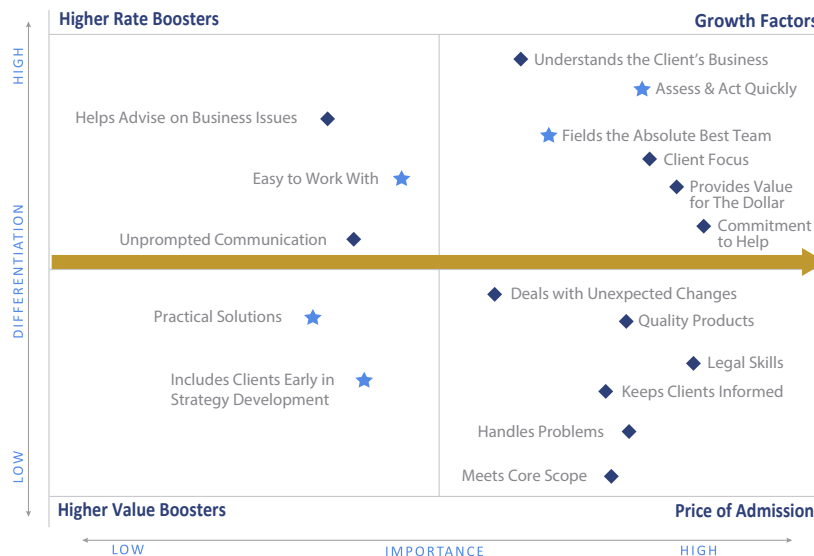
Source: *Clientelligence™: How Superior Client Relationships Fuel Growth and Profits* by Michael B. Rynowecer

The BTI 17 Activities Driving The Best Client Relationships

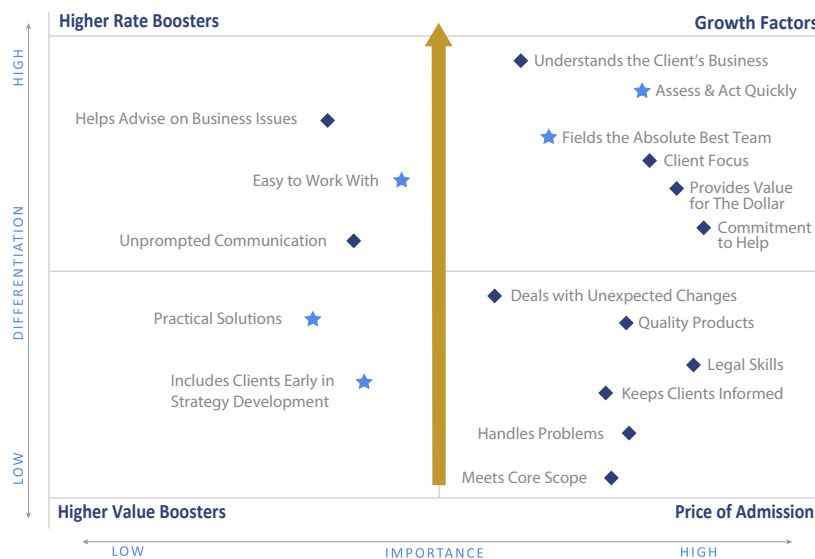
BTI's research with more than 28,000 buyers of professional services isolates the 17 activities essential to delivering the best client service and driving the best professional relationships. Corporate counsel then assess each activity on 2 dimensions – importance and differentiation – to identify the activities most important and most influential when evaluating legal providers.

How to Read BTI's 17 Activities Quadrant Map

BTI's 17 Activities Quadrant Map measures the components of client service along 2 key dimensions:



The horizontal axis of this chart represents relative importance of each activity. Activities on the right side of the chart are more important to legal decision makers than activities on the left side.



The vertical axis of this chart represents the strength of each activity's ability to differentiate a law firm. Activities on the top half of the chart are harder for legal decision makers to find in a law firm – making them strong differentiators.

BTI's ongoing research with corporate counsel shows how each quadrant in the chart exhibits distinct characteristics and plays an important role in developing and maintaining the best relationships with legal decision makers.

Understanding the Impact of Each Client Service Attribute and Activity

What are BTI's 17 Activities Driving The Best Client Relationships and Development?

The Growth Factors: The Upper Right

8 activities are most important to corporate counsel. Corporate counsel see these activities as scarce; yet, they drive hiring decisions on a continuing basis. Law firms can draw on these growth factors to develop substantially more business from existing clients.

Price of Admission: The Lower Right

Corporate counsel point to 6 activities as the minimum requirements expected from any law firm. These activities are of high importance. They are also widely available. Clients expect you to deliver these activities in order to win work, but they do not differentiate you enough to be the sole decision criteria.

Higher Rate Boosters: The Upper Left

These 3 high-value differentiators are proven to motivate a client to see more value – and pay for it. The best clients – those with complex needs and paying higher rates – value these activities the most.

Immediate Value Boosters: The Lower Left

These are business development tools under cover of client service. These activities are:

- Practical Solutions
- Includes Clients Early in Strategy and Approach

These drivers instill unmatched confidence in a law firm – not having to worry about solutions and approach relieves 2 of the biggest client concerns.

Clients Rank Law Firms by Performance Levels

Nominated law firms receive 1 of 4 honors correlating to their level of achievement in each of the 17 Activities Driving The Best Client Relationships:



Best of the Best

The Best of the Best, these firms perform 9 to 15 times better than typical law firms. Clients see these firms at the pinnacle of performance in the BTI Client Service A-Team; they set the standard for other firms to match.



Leaders

Clients rank these firms as nipping at the heels of the Best of the Best. Part of a select group of firms, Leaders are on the cusp of the Best of the Best and stand ahead of most law firms in the market.



Distinguished

The Distinguished client service performers are in the upper ranks of all law firms. They put tremendous distance between themselves and most other firms.



Standouts

The law firms who stand out for their performance in the BTI Client Service A-Team, these firms are already ranked higher than more than half the market – placing them in a distinct group clients see as providing the superior levels of client service required to truly differentiate these Standout firms.

Missing in Action

Clients managed to overlook the 390 law firms not included in the BTI Client Service A-Team. In many cases, client service is at minimally acceptable levels – which neither meet nor exceed client expectations. Many of these firms have sporadic efforts to boost client service or have partners who deliver excellent client service – but don't deliver firmwide. These firms can change their performance with the right programs and management backing.

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Methodology and Approach

Methodology and Approach

2025 Survey Participant Demographics

BTI Client Service A-Team 2025 draws on data collected in BTI's ongoing Annual Survey of General Counsel. This study includes between 50% and 55% of companies participating in prior years. This approach provides for accurate analysis of longitudinal trends while simultaneously allowing for insights into new, changing, and coming shifts in the legal market.

INTERVIEWS AND SURVEYS: More than **350**

TIME FRAME: Conducted between **May 2024** and **June 2025**

INCENTIVES: Contributors receive a complimentary report of legal benchmarks and metrics

Highest-ranking Legal Decision Makers

- General Counsel/Chief Legal Officer
- Direct Report to General Counsel
- Other Legal Decision Maker



No law firm submissions, self-referrals, firm referrals, suggestions, or payments are accepted for inclusion.



All interviews with top legal decision makers are confidential and anonymous, by company and person.



Probed more than 300 top legal decision makers at large organizations with \$1 billion or more in revenue.



The BTI Client Service A-Team 2025 draws solely on in-depth, telephone-based interviews as part of BTI's ongoing Annual Survey of General Counsel, now in its 23rd year.



BTI is the sole sponsor of this research. BTI funds the research and controls the editorial content.

Representative of More Than 15 Industry Segments

Companies ranged in size from \$1 billion in revenue to the largest companies in the world.

Banking	Healthcare	Professional Services
Chemicals	High Tech	Retail Trade
Consumer Goods	Insurance	Telecom
Energy	Investment Banks	Transportation
Financial Services	Manufacturing	Wholesale Trade
Food & Agriculture	Pharma	



About The BTI Consulting Group, Inc.

What We Do

For more than 30 years, we've successfully helped our clients strategically drive revenue, boost performance, attract and retain clients, develop more business in new and existing markets, and create enduring relationships with our data-driven customized programs and solutions tailored to meet each client's specific and unique needs.

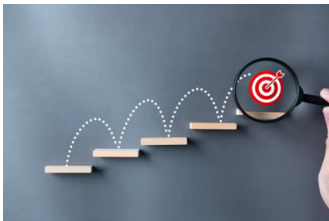
We examine the market from your client's perspective with a measurable, innovative, and high-impact approach.

From in-depth independent research to one-on-one interviews with C-suite executives, top legal decision makers and market leaders, our expertise and insight will help you understand – as well as benchmark – how clients acquire, manage, and evaluate their professional services providers.



Client Feedback Programs

We help you reveal powerful, defining client insights you simply can't get anywhere else through innovative, world-class feedback.



Business Development Training

We help you and your firm catapult your business development skills, culture, and mindset – fast.



Client Service Excellence

We help you redefine how clients think about you and your firm for the short and long term.



Market Research and Insightful Client-Centric Reports

Authoritative, innovative, and practical advice from our research. BTI's client service rankings, brand health assessments, market forecasts, and more are the industry gold standard.

Leading-Edge Insights

Authoritative, innovative, and practical advice from our research

Law firms who would otherwise have little insight into corporate counsel hiring decisions, goals, law firm preferences, market positions, and detailed recommendations can now gain access to the same research used by the largest and best-performing firms in the world. The data and insight found in BTI's reports are used to train attorneys, guide business development, inform strategy, and calibrate market trends against firm tactics. In short, you get many of the benefits of a custom study commissioned for your firm at a fraction of the cost. These insights are proven to drive growth and client retention and protect fees.

Our reports come with a 100% satisfaction guarantee and complete telephone support to help you maximize the value from our publications.

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BTI Benchmarking Law Firm LinkedIn Performance 2025

BTI Benchmarking Law Firm LinkedIn Performance 2025: Unleash the Power of LinkedIn delineates how law firms are performing along 6 key metrics – including rankings of law firms' performance by name in each metric – and includes detailed recommendations on improving your position.



Order Now

BTI Most Recommended Law Firms 2025

The most enduring, longest-lasting relationships started with a simple, unsolicited suggestion from one legal decision maker to another. *BTI Most Recommended Law Firms 2025* shares the names of the firms earning these recommendations above all others. The report details – overall and by industry – how to earn more than your share of these growth drivers.



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BTI Litigation Outlook 2025

Our 15th BTI Litigation Outlook reveals the vast increase in complexity and spending in litigation. It also uncovers how much more aggressive litigation has become. Increased spending, complexity and aggressiveness create big opportunities for law firms. The BTI Litigation Outlook 2025 is available now to help you decipher the new market dynamics and seize the opportunity.

Michael B. Rynowecer, Founder & President a.k.a. The Mad Clientist



For questions, research inquiries, and information about BTI's client feedback programs, market insight research, seminars, training, or workshops, please contact us by calling **+1 617 439 0333** or via email at **mrynowecer@bticonsulting.com**.

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