

A photograph of three business professionals in a meeting. A woman in the foreground is looking at a laptop screen, with two men behind her also looking at the screen. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting an office environment.

Word of Mouth Wins

2018 Legal Industry Study Findings



- 2.4 billion buying conversations take place daily—online and offline. You can buy in or earn in.
- Earned leads (those coming from word of mouth) outperform purchased leads 10 to 1—and obviously cost nearly nothing.
- 93% of people conduct serious research online before purchasing anything—especially business solutions.
- Keeping a customer costs 80% less than acquiring a new customer.



“The Internet has completely changed how word of mouth spreads—first with B2C and now B2B and B2B2C.”

Brett Walker
Marketing expert and
RainBoost founder

An Age-Old Approach

Word of mouth is as old as business itself. We asked 3,500 attorneys how this works for them. Study participants universally agreed that reputation and client relationships are the key drivers of word of mouth. The aim of our study was to better understand which methods are being used, preferred, and producing results. Here’s what we found.

A NEW TAKE ON AN OLD APPROACH

In just three questions, we explored how well attorneys and their firms were leveraging digital methods for generating more word of mouth and found the following about attorneys and their firms:

- **High awareness, low use.** 80% are highly aware of digital marketing methods but just 2 in 5 actually use these services.
- **Paid over earned.** “Paid” methods (such as Google Adwords or sponsored listings on sites such as Avvo and Martindale) are used 2X more often than less expensive “earned” methods (such as online reviews, social media, and business directories).
- **Low experience with earned methods.** It follows that paid methods are overall 3X more valued than earned methods, but the experience gap here is enormous—with just under 25% of attorneys having experience with earned methods.
- **Earned methods are most preferred.** Those most familiar with all methods prefer the earned methods of Facebook and LinkedIn over the paid solutions from Avvo and Martindale-Hubbel by nearly 15%.
- **New methods are highest priority.** Fully one-third indicate word of mouth oriented activities as their highest marketing priority for 2018.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Firms want to enhance their reputation—by attorney and practice area.

It is noteworthy that with the major change in Yelp's policy for encouraging reviews dated November 2017 ([see this article](#)), just 12% of firms see Yelp as a priority for 2018 compared with nearly 3X that number indicating they want online reviews on other sites.



BOOSTING REPUTATION

Best practice methods for boosting the reputation of an individual attorney or enabling a firm to get better known for a specific practice area include:

- Asking clients to write online reviews for each staff attorney and/or by area of practice (on Google +, Google My Business, Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter)



- Streaming these online reviews to your firm's website and also better featuring areas of practice or individual attorneys and their strengths
- Developing a social media outreach program where content related to individual attorneys or firm practice areas is created and published
- Updating business listings across 100s of business directories using a power listing service
- Selecting an experienced partner who can manage this for you

STUDY SPONSOR

Based on literally 30 years of in-the-trenches marketing and business development, RainBoost drives the one thing that always works—word of mouth. When your customers talk you up, you win.

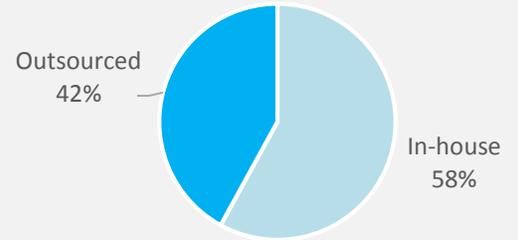
RainBoost combines client outreach, social media, and website improvements to lift your reputation even higher and drive greater word of mouth.



Request your free web presence analysis at rainboost.com.

WHO WILL DO THE WORK?

Just over half of those surveyed intend to use internal resources to get this work done. While we did not ask about capacity (skill and resource availability), it is clear that the greatest subject matter expertise is within a firm and that outsourcing can be difficult to manage.



OUTSOURCING PRIORITIES

That said, top priorities for firms to outsource are:

- 1 Online reputation management** (firms are 28% more likely to use a third-party for this service)
- 2 Web site improvements** (firms are 22% more likely to use a third-party)

