

"Deeply insightful, practical, and engaging, this book is the definitive clarion call for law firms to become relentlessly client-centered."

PROFESSOR RICHARD SUSSKIND OBE, author of *Tomorrow's Lawyers*



THE CLIENT CENTERED LAW FIRM

How to Succeed in an
Experience-Driven World

JACK NEWTON

Praise for

The Client-Centered Law Firm

“For more than a decade, Jack Newton has had the unenviable job of selling software to lawyers. With remarkable success, he has prevailed and, on the way, built a deep understanding of what makes law firms tick and stumble. This book is an excellent distillation of this insight, above all calling for law firms to swing round and face the market, to focus relentlessly on the needs of clients, and to ceaselessly improve client experiences. A considerable and important contribution to the law firm literature.”

PROFESSOR RICHARD SUSSKIND OBE, AUTHOR OF
TOMORROW'S LAWYERS

“We as lawyers often focus on ‘what’ legal services we provide instead of on ‘how’ we do it. Jack Newton’s new book, *The Client-Centered Law Firm*, is (rightly) all about the ‘how.’ Based on Jack’s wealth of experience servicing clients in the legal marketplace, this book provides a useful guide on how to enhance client service with client-centricity and also, importantly, how to measure progress. It is a must-read for all types of legal professionals.”

MICHELE DESTEFANO, PROFESSOR OF LAW, UNIVERSITY
OF MIAMI, AFFILIATED FACULTY, HARVARD LAW SCHOOL
EXECUTIVE EDUCATION, FOUNDER, LAWWITHOUTWALLS

THE
CLIENT
CENTERED
LAW FIRM

Introduction

THE CLIENT-CENTERED REVOLUTION

FOR MORE THAN 10 years, my goal has been to empower lawyers to spend more time and energy on what they love: practicing law. I've spent many hours talking to lawyers, legal professionals, regulators, consultants, and IT professionals about what law firms need to succeed. I've also been lucky enough to witness massive change in the legal industry, with firms migrating to the cloud and becoming more data-driven.

But change isn't coming fast enough. Throughout the years, one nagging theme has stood out to me: Most lawyers and law firms don't prioritize *product-market fit* between their services and their clients. Some do, and countless leading legal thinkers have been talking about it for years, but the vast majority don't think about how their overall services match client needs. The opportunity for the legal industry to not only survive but to thrive hinges on our ability to strengthen

the product-market fit between lawyers and consumers of legal services.

Product-market fit is the degree to which your product or service satisfies market demand. In the tech industry, if you don't have it, you don't survive, period. Finding product-market fit isn't simple or straightforward. If it were, then we wouldn't see 90% of startups failing.

Companies like Uber, Netflix, and Airbnb have radically raised the baseline of user ease that customers now expect thanks to rapid ride-hailing, instant access to movies, and luxurious, affordable short-term vacation rentals that are available anywhere in the world. This new baseline has influenced what today's legal client expects from their lawyer. But, unfortunately, law firms aren't yet delivering.

According to the *2018 Legal Trends Report*, many legal clients (40%) experience frustration when hiring a lawyer, and many more aren't using lawyers for their legal needs: 57% of consumers surveyed for the report have had a life issue that could have been handled legally but wasn't. A report from the World Justice Project found that 77% of people in the US didn't get legal help for their legal issues in 2018. This product-market gap in legal is causing potential clients to simply not use lawyers.

I believe it's possible to bridge this gap and for the legal industry to succeed, but it's going to require accepting that the status quo is no longer working and committing to long-term change. I also believe there's an approach that can get us there—and that's what this book is about.

The future for law firms is client-centered.

Client-centered law firms succeed because they compete on experience in a world where experience is king. This

focus leads them to better reviews, more referrals, and more returning clients, and it doesn't come at the expense of their internal operations—far from it. Client-centered firms know that providing a good client experience and running an efficient, profitable law firm aren't opposing ideas. With the right approach, they drive each other.

There's plenty of opportunity for law firms that are willing to take charge of their futures: A few years ago, Thomson Reuters reported that the US legal services market was worth \$437 billion annually, and that's just the tip of the iceberg. As we'll explore, there's a tremendous amount of latent demand in the legal market that both alternative legal service providers *and* law firms can access, provided that law firms focus on delivering a better product-market fit. Finding that fit starts with a better client experience.

This book is both a rallying call for a tectonic shift in the legal industry and a handbook for becoming a client-centered law firm. It's divided into three parts, covering the what, why, and how of running a client-centered practice, and it features numerous examples from forward-thinking legal professionals who are already putting client-centered practices into action.

Part 1 discusses why the legal market is changing and why a client-centered approach makes sense in today's experience-driven world. I challenge the idea that lawyers are different from other service providers, especially in the eyes of the consumer, and explain why I believe that we're now at an inflection point, driven by changing consumer demands. I talk about how expectations have shifted for today's legal clients, how a lack of product-market fit has led to immense latent demand for legal services, how a *client-centered* approach differs from a *client-first* one, and how

a client-centered approach empowers your firm to harness something called the flywheel effect to grow and thrive. I also go into detail about why the client experience you provide is seen as part and parcel of the product clients are paying you for—right alongside your legal advice or any legal deliverables—which means that providing a good client experience is a necessity rather than a nice-to-have.

Part 2 covers what it means to run a client-centered law firm, including five core values, and how to cultivate a client-centered mindset. I talk about client-journey mapping—a tool that visualizes the different stages of a client’s experience with your law firm to identify opportunities for improvement—and explain why developing deep empathy (and acting on it) is critical for client-centered firms.

Part 3 is your toolkit for implementing lasting client-centered change at your law firm. It explains how to effectively design processes and tools, how to get buy-in for change from staff and lawyers, and how to navigate the shift to a client-centered culture. I end off with advice on how to measure success, as well as how to act on feedback and data insights: This final step keeps the flywheel of success turning, enabling you to increase internal efficiencies, grow your client base, and thrive like never before.

One note on semantics. Design thinking fans will note that there’s a subtle difference between creating good client experiences and *designing for* good client experiences. Technically, you can’t create an experience *for* anyone else, because you can’t control how anyone else thinks or feels. Also, the experiences that drive people to seek legal help stretch far beyond the interactions they might have with a law firm, and it’s impossible to control all external factors. You can create a

bright, welcoming lobby and make the client-intake process as painless as possible, but if you practice family law, many clients will still be facing one of the most difficult challenges of their lives, and a bright setting won't take that pain away. It *does* however create the scaffolding needed to make your client's experience as effortless and positive as possible—in other words, you've designed *for* a better experience. To keep things simple, I refer to this idea as creating good/better client experiences throughout the book.

The world is constantly changing, and law firms, like every other type of business, must adapt. Whether you're a partner, an associate, an IT manager, a paralegal, or a legal assistant; whether you're a consultant or an office manager; whether you're a solo lawyer, a student, or a member of a large law firm—I hope this book sparks a meaningful shift for you and inspires you to pass that client-centered spark on to others as well.

Most of all, I hope that you turn inspiration into action and that your law firm succeeds like never before in today's experience-driven world.



PART 1

THE AGE OF EXPERIENCE

FOR TODAY'S CONSUMER, experience is everything.

The myriad tiny interactions that happen before, during, and after a consumer buys a product might seem inconsequential individually, but collectively they can make or break a business. This is true whether your organization sells a tangible product or provides a service.

Think about how you feel when you enter a Starbucks. You enter a warmly lit, cleanly designed coffee shop with plenty of space to sit. You order your beverage of choice from the barista, personalized to your taste (that is, if you haven't ordered using the app ahead of time). There's free Wi-Fi in case you need to check your email while you wait, which is good news, because while you'd love to stop and enjoy the coffee, you're having an incredibly busy day as always. You receive your order promptly and you're on your way.

Now think about how it feels to order something from Amazon. You haven't traveled in a while, and you're about to go on a trip, but when you get your old carry-on suitcase out

of your closet, you discover that one of the wheels has fallen off and your zipper has broken. You need a new one, but you don't want something that's going to fall apart again. You want a quality piece, reasonably priced. You head to Amazon.com. A quick search brings up a number of options. Detailed descriptions and reviews give you an idea of which product best meets your needs, and once you've made your choice, you place your order with a single click. You select one day shipping—your purchase arrives at your doorstep the next day, just in time to pack—and you head off on your trip without issue.

In both of these scenarios, you got what you wanted, and you got it quickly and easily in a way that made sense to you. You didn't get value solely from the product you were buying; you got value from your *experience* buying the product as well.

The customer (or client) experience is the totality of a person's interactions with any given business. It's a key piece of the value that organizations offer. Modern consumers expect more than a product or service: they expect an end-to-end customer experience that makes sense. When the customer experience is negative, or even lukewarm, that's detrimental to the value a company provides. Good service is a baseline expectation, and customers won't put up with less. They'll take their business elsewhere.

Consider this scenario: you decide to buy your carry-on luggage directly from a brand's website instead of via Amazon. You need information to choose the suitcase best for you, but the website takes forever to load. You try contacting the company with a question, but the phone number is hard to find, and no one answers your call. You fill out the "contact us" form, but there's no confirmation when you click "submit," and you never get a response. Not only will you likely

not make that purchase, you might complain to your friends and you certainly won't recommend or revisit that supplier. Or even buy that brand on Amazon.

Joshua Kubicki, cofounder of Bold Duck Studio and former head of strategy at Seyfarth Shaw, often speaks about how a focus on experience transformed Starbucks from a humble commodity supplier—of coffee—into something much more valuable. The experience at Starbucks (well-designed shops, excellent service, streamlined ordering, and more) is the bedrock of a brand that's grown from a small Seattle coffee shop to a global business with a market capitalization of nearly \$90 billion. Starbucks is the world's largest coffee chain with 27,000 locations in more than 76 countries worldwide.

Law firms aren't coffee shops, but there's a useful parallel: Law firms deliver a product (i.e., legal advice) and an experience (i.e., interactions with your law firm), and clients view these as one and the same. This is true whether your firm serves individuals or large businesses; at the end of the day, we're all human.

This quote from an interview with Joshua best explains the point:

Lawyers think of client value as the advice and counsel they're giving, or their work product, which is absolutely, hands down, one of the things that clients buy. But that's not the *only* thing clients are buying. If you are a pain to do business with, or you're just rude, or you're obnoxious, or you can't get a bill out on time, or your bills don't make any sense, sooner or later that client relationship is going to erode. You're providing negative value even though you may be the smartest lawyer there is.

It doesn't take much for clients to look elsewhere for better service. According to the results of the PwC's Future of Customer Experience survey, **32% of customers would stop doing business with a brand they loved after just one bad experience.**

A good experience, on the other hand, is the difference that makes someone choose one coffee shop, online retailer—or law firm—over another. And since law is an industry based on reputation and word-of-mouth referrals, experience is crucial and can't be overlooked.

Expectation Osmosis

A cross-industry trend that's important to take a look at here—because it affects the legal industry in a big way—is how consumer choice has exploded. Consider how, in the recent past, people had few choices if they wanted to watch a movie, book a place to stay on vacation, or get a ride from point A to point B. The options available came with mildly inconvenient experiences—not unpleasant, just less than ideal—and people accepted that. They drove to Blockbuster. They wandered through aisles of DVDs and VHS tapes wondering what to rent, because the hot new release was taken already. They forgot to return the tape on time and were charged late fees. They paid handsomely for hotels in business districts far from the cultural centers of the cities they visited and booked rooms without any idea of what they'd look like. They got soaked in the rain while trying to hail a taxi, accepted whatever price the meter landed on at the end of the trip, and fumbled for cash when the credit card machine broke—again.

In 1997, Netflix gave consumers the option to rent DVDs by mail, eliminating the drive to the video rental store. Then

the company offered the option to pay a flat monthly fee to stream as many movies and television shows from their collection as you'd like—with no need to rent individual titles and no late fees. They even developed a personalized recommendation system to make it easy to find something you might like to watch. Today, with over 150 million subscribers globally and a market capitalization of more than \$115 billion, Netflix is one of the largest video-streaming services in the world. Blockbuster is bankrupt.

In 2008, two roommates and a friend launched *airbedandbreakfast.com* to rent out air mattresses and provide breakfast to guests so that they could afford their rent. This morphed into Airbnb, providing site visitors with extensive photos, reviews, and clear pricing for thousands of rental accommodations. There are now more than 6 million Airbnb listings worldwide and at least 2 million people stay in an Airbnb rental every night.

In 2010, UberCab launched, giving people the ability to hail a luxury black car for a ride with the click of a button. No more waiting in the rain. In 2012, Uber launched UberX as a more affordable ride-hailing option, and today riders use the app and enjoy an up-front quoted price for their trip, automatic payment, and the ability to rate the driver. Uber is now available in 700 cities across the globe and has an estimated 110 million users worldwide; 14 million Uber trips are taken every day. But Uber wasn't the only company to see the value of providing a better ride: Lyft launched in 2012 as a service of Zimride, a carpooling company launched in 2007, and the ridesharing industry has exploded around the world.

In each of these cases, customers are still getting the same product or service as before, but the *experience* is completely different. Finding a movie to watch, a place to stay, or a ride

across town no longer comes with a slightly annoying experience. People have a choice, and when the choice is between a subpar experience and an effortless one, they vote with their dollars and choose the latter.

Companies like Netflix, Airbnb, and Uber aren't only changing expectations in their respective industries. They're changing expectations in *all* industries: If you're used to seeing exactly what you'd get and what you'd pay up-front when booking a vacation rental, why would you expect any less when working with a law firm?

Expectations have been set in arenas that are relatively inconsequential, like watching a movie or hailing a ride. But when clients are going through a substantially difficult life event—like a civil lawsuit or divorce—they *need* that experience to be as painless as possible, and they now expect law firms to anticipate their needs. Consciously or unconsciously, your clients are comparing their experience with your firm to the five-star experiences they have elsewhere—and it's time for your firm to catch up.

If you don't like to think of your practice as a business, consider this: I'm not asking you to become a business mogul and focus on profits over the practice of law—I'm asking you to educate yourself on how to efficiently provide good client experiences and make strategic decisions about how you run your practice, so that you can spend more time practicing law.

Meeting Versus Exceeding Expectations

Today's consumer (who is also your legal client) has high expectations—but that may not mean what you think it does.

There's no need to dazzle and delight your clients at every opportunity. In fact, there's no need to *exceed* expectations at all. As long as you can *meet* expectations, you're good—and you'll be ahead of most law firms. The problem is this can be surprisingly hard to do.

In *The Effortless Experience*, Matthew Dixon, Nick Toman, and Rick DeLisi surveyed over 97,000 customers to ask about a recent service interaction they had and to see how this impacted customer loyalty. The findings were incredibly interesting. First, exceeding customer expectations made basically zero difference in how loyal a customer was likely to be (i.e., whether they'd continue paying for a given service or for products from the company). Loyalty plateaus once a customer's expectations are met.

A strategy of going above and beyond to create happy customers for life sounds good, but in reality, for most organizations, it's expensive and distracts from the core focus of a business. When you go the extra mile for one customer, that only impacts that one customer. Your grand gesture won't likely have a long-lasting effect on your day-to-day business. However, if you can improve your processes to help one client, you'll improve the experience for *all* of your clients. Taking care to ensure your clients' needs are met in the best possible way is a much better investment. It's also rare that opportunities to delight customers present themselves, and it's difficult to get it right. Providing a pleasant surprise for a customer in the form of free shipping is one thing, but providing a personalized surprise that deeply resonates with someone is difficult, even if you know them well.

What *does* make a difference in customer loyalty is how much *effort* a customer has to put in to resolve a given issue.

“

—

*If you can improve
your processes
to help one client,
you'll improve the
experience for all
of your clients.*

—

”

Four of the five biggest drivers of disloyalty resulting from customer service interactions were effort related. The biggest offender? Having to contact a company more than once to resolve an issue. That isn't surprising: No one likes calling their wireless carrier even once.

With that in mind, it's not hard to see why Netflix disrupted Blockbuster, why Airbnb disrupted the hotel industry, or why Uber disrupted the taxi industry. They didn't concern themselves with dazzling customers—they focused intently on giving them what they wanted in a more convenient way.

I've always had simple, predictable experiences with Uber and other ridesharing services. I usually get a pretty clean car. It's comfortable. The drivers are polite. They drive safely. And I can always get a ride when I need one. Contrast that with the taxi industry in Vancouver. At the time of writing, ridesharing has yet to come to the city, which means we still use good old-fashioned taxis to get from A to B. When I return from a business trip, I wait in line for up to 45 minutes outside the airport for a ride home. If I'm out late in downtown Vancouver, I'm rolling the dice as to whether a taxi will be willing to drive me all the way home (it's common for taxis to refuse service to riders wanting to go too far outside of the downtown core late at night).

This is the very embodiment of a fungible commodity differentiated by service. One version of a ride home is delivered with proper tools and technology to create an effortless experience, and the other is delivered without those things in a way that makes the experience negative. And that makes all the difference. In any city where Uber or other ridesharing services *are* available, I choose one of those over a taxi ride in a heartbeat—and many other consumers do too.

Most Uber drivers don't go out of their way to provide an amazing experience. Sure, there was that one time in New Orleans during our annual conference when our driver told us to "pick a song" from a tablet, kicking off a disco-ball light show and incredibly fun ride, but I don't use Uber expecting that every time. I use it because it meets my expectations for a quick and comfortable ride home. Who would wait 45 minutes for a taxi when they could order a ride in minutes with an app on their phone?

Unfortunately, the taxi industry has been slow to catch on to the need to better meet consumer expectations. That might be because in the past, they haven't had to: Many cities issue a limited number of medallions that must be displayed by taxis each year, so there's a cap on the number of cabs available at any given time. Taxis were once the only option (outside of public transit or private car services), so there was no need for the industry to consider the customer experience.

Understandably, taxi owners and drivers around the world who've paid exorbitant prices for taxi medallions are upset. Many have taken to the streets to protest ridesharing, arguing that it isn't fair for companies like Uber to circumvent the system. And one can certainly sympathize (to a point), but with the advent of Uber, the dynamic has shifted, and there's no going back. Customers have a simpler option for getting a ride, and they're voting with their dollars.

It's a similar story in legal: Some law firms still don't feel the pressure to provide a better client experience because they believe that as the only ones able to provide a certain product (in this case, legal advice), clients need them more than the other way around. As it did for the taxi industry, this adherence to the status quo in the legal industry is leading to a breaking point.

The legal profession is traditionally risk averse, and rightly so—but in this case, those who cling to the status quo are taking the biggest risk of all.

A Buyer's Market

For years, leading legal thinkers have been writing about how technology, the global economy, and innovative legal service providers are chipping away at the monopoly lawyers once held over the law. The legal industry is facing a crisis.

In his book *Law Is a Buyer's Market*, Jordan Furlong argues that while law was once a seller's market—with lawyers holding all the power and clients having no choice but to accept how firms operated—it is now a buyer's market, and clients are understandably sick of the old one-sided dynamic.

New technologies now do what only lawyers could once do, and these capabilities continue to grow. (Just think of Joshua Browder's DoNotPay bot: It's a chatbot created to help people fight parking tickets without needing to see a lawyer, and now you can also use it to sue.) The internet has given the public unprecedented access to legal knowledge. Globalization has led to the offshoring of legal services, with lowered pricing expectations. The global financial crisis took place over a decade ago, but we're still feeling the effects today. As Jordan points out, this means consumers are a hell of a lot more likely to avoid hiring a lawyer for their legal issues, and if they do hire one, they're more likely to want the bare minimum needed to solve their legal issue in order to keep costs down.

At the same time, regulations against the unauthorized practice of law have started to wane in states such as

“

—

*Adherence to the
status quo in
the legal industry
is leading to
a breaking point.*

—

”

Washington and New York, giving rise to partial “lawyer substitutes,” or parallel technologies and providers that help with bits and pieces of legal work. Needless to say, this stands to further impact demand. (Jordan provides a nuanced discussion of the benefits and challenges of new providers of legal services in his book, and I’d encourage you to read it.)

Some firms are already adapting to this new world. In her book *Legal Upheaval*, Michele DeStefano talks about how innovative law firms are using AI tools to help with tasks such as document review, contract analysis, research, and even litigation analytics. (Premonition is a tool that helps predict which lawyers win which types of cases in front of particular judges.) But in Michele’s interviews with over 100 general counsels (GCs) and law firm partners, the general consensus was that firms have yet to catch up with other sectors in terms of service and experience, and companies are getting frustrated. Sometimes, they want an in-depth legal solution, and sometimes they want a quick and dirty one, and they expect lawyers to respond to those needs. They also want lawyers to anticipate knock-on effects and future problems and provide solutions for those, and they want to know *what* to do with their legal advice rather than being left to figure that out themselves.

They don’t want to have to call back twice. Sound familiar?

With changing market dynamics and a shift in demand for the type of work people want from their lawyers, law firms have a massive opportunity to differentiate themselves based on experience. Technology can help with a lot, but it can’t do everything. The empathy, intuition, and specialized responses that come from real, live human experts are things that only lawyers can offer. People and businesses

still want a sage guide to help them through whatever legal issue they're facing. If lawyers capitalize on this, they'll position themselves to ride the wave of changing economies and technologies and achieve huge success. But if they don't, they risk being left behind as the industry and client expectations evolve without them.

Experience Is King

Lawyers have an incredibly important job in upholding the laws that hold our society together. But their role reaches well beyond interpreting the law and providing legal advice: Lawyers guide people through their entire experience when facing a legal issue—from a client's first interaction with a law firm to the final invoice and any follow-up. Their service extends beyond legal deliverables, even beyond meeting rooms and phone calls. It encompasses every single interaction a client has with a firm.

But when it comes to providing thoughtful client service, many law firms are missing the mark. Clio's *2018 Legal Trends Report* analyzed aggregated and anonymized data from tens of thousands of legal professionals and surveyed 1,968 legal professionals and 1,336 consumers to take a closer look at the industry's trends. There were a few notable findings related to client experience.

First, consumers aren't happy with the level of service that the legal industry provides.

To get an overall read on how satisfied clients are with their experiences using lawyers, the researchers looked at factors that impacted Net Promoter Score (NPS), a metric commonly

used to rate customer satisfaction. It's calculated based on answers to the question "On a scale of 0 to 10, how likely are you to recommend my services to a friend or colleague?" and graded on a scale of -100 to +100. (You will learn how to track your firm's NPS in Chapter 12.) The NPS for the legal industry as a whole was a low 25—on par with wireless carriers, banks, and credit card companies. For comparison, high NPS companies such as Amazon and Netflix—companies that you likely know and love in your day-to-day life and that put a serious focus on the customer experience—have scores closer to 70.

Second, law firms don't realize that their clients are less than enthused about their services: 40% of clients feel frustration as part of the experience when hiring a lawyer, but only 8% of law firms perceive this to be the case.

Third, lawyers don't communicate with clients in ways that their clients expect. The report compared how clients wanted to undertake certain interactions (updates, payments, and signing contracts via email, phone, or in person, etc.) with how lawyers *thought* clients wanted to undertake those interactions, and lawyers definitely didn't accurately predict what clients wanted. For example, 70% of clients want to tell their lawyer about the details of their matter in person, but only 3% of lawyers thought this was the case. Lawyers predicted that clients would prefer email (51%) or a phone call (39%).

Finally, a lot of consumers simply aren't using lawyers. Only 65% of people surveyed for the report had actually hired a lawyer despite having a legal problem they'd faced in the two years prior. Many consumers are concerned that hiring a lawyer is overwhelming (39%) or too much trouble (32%), which impacts their decision to get legal help. This lines up

“

—

*40% of clients feel
frustration as part of
the experience when hiring
a lawyer, but only 8%
of law firms perceive this
to be the case.*

—

”

with a report from the World Justice Project: 77% of those surveyed in the United States didn't turn to an authority or third party to resolve their legal issue. In the United Kingdom, that number is a staggering 93%.

Meanwhile, lawyers aren't spending as much time as they'd like lawyering, in part because they're focused on trying to find new clients. The *2018 Legal Trends Report* found that lawyers are only spending about 2.4 hours per day on billable work, and since 75% of lawyers also report working outside of regular business hours, that's not much time spent practicing law. But on any given day, lawyers are also spending an average 1.4 hours networking to meet new clients and build referrals, and nearly an hour on tasks related to advertising. In Clio's 2017 report, lawyers surveyed said they spent on average 33% of their non-billable hours on business development, but 41% said that if they had even more time, they'd spend that on looking for new clients too.

So to sum up, clients aren't getting the experience they want from lawyers, and many don't even use a lawyer for their legal issues. At the same time, lawyers are working hard to find more clients and would spend more time on it if they could.

There's a huge gap here, but the solution is simple: If lawyers focused on giving clients the simplified experience they wanted, their clients would be happier, more likely to engage with a lawyer, and more likely to encourage others to do so as well. All of this would mean better reviews and more referrals for law firms, improving bottom lines. Law firms need to change their business models to match an environment where experience is king.

There's no shortage of research to show that developing an effortless client experience is one of the best investments a business can make:

- An overwhelming 86% of consumers would pay more for a better customer experience, according to Oracle's Customer Experience Impact Report.
- Adobe's 2018 Digital Trends report found that "organizations with 'a cohesive plan, long-term view, and executive support for the future of their customer' are more than twice as likely as their peers to significantly outperform their competitors (27% vs. 13%)."
- Nearly two-thirds (61%) of consumers agreed they feel loyal to brands that tailor experiences to their preferences and needs, per the Reinventing Loyalty report by Goldsmiths University and Adobe.
- According to RightNow's Customer Experience Impact Report, 55% of consumers would be willing to recommend a company based on their outstanding service—and this was more important than the company's product or its price. (An important factor since according to the 2019 Legal Trends Report, 59% of consumers seek a referral of some kind when they're looking to hire a lawyer.)

Provide a better experience by paying attention to what your legal clients *truly* need, and you'll generate more revenue, outperform your competitors, and earn more positive referrals. Ignore what your clients want, and your firm may go the way of Blockbuster. Apps, robots, and non-lawyer legal service providers won't replace law firms anytime soon—but law firms that leverage these tools to provide a better customer experience will become the norm, and law firms that stick to pen and paper and take two days to call a client back will find themselves struggling.

The world is changing. Your clients know a better experience is possible, and they expect it everywhere—even from their law firm. They use Google and instant messaging apps and online credit card payments every day, which means they notice when a law firm hasn't bothered to adopt those technologies. People used to be willing to play phone tag but now—with options like texting and online scheduling tools—clients are more discerning about such inconveniences.

There's an emotional aspect to this change in expectations as well. When you're forced to chase down your lawyer, or wait in the rain for a ride, or book a hotel room without knowing what you're going to get, it feels disappointing, and as a customer, you don't feel valued. The idea that someone couldn't be bothered to make your experience painless, or that they've actively engineered things to be more convenient for their organization at your expense, leads many consumers to choose an alternative service provider next time. Conversely, when someone provides an experience that *is* geared toward your needs, it isn't just more convenient. Someone gets you. Someone cared enough to make an everyday experience a bit easier for you. In many cases, you might not notice this type of experience when it's there, but this thoughtfulness builds a subtle but important trust that keeps you coming back—and you'll certainly notice when it's missing.

It's entirely possible for your law firm to capitalize on this need for a better client experience, and just like Netflix, Uber, and Airbnb discovered in their respective marketplaces, there's a massive competitive advantage waiting for the firm that embraces this thinking.

“

—

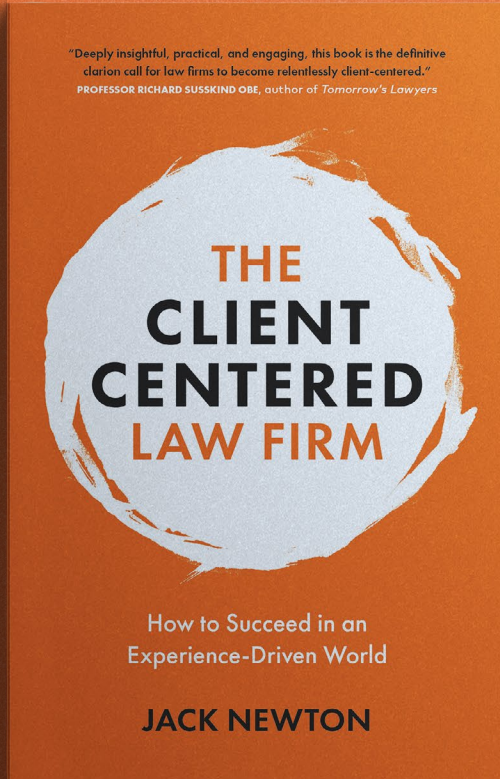
*There's a huge gap here,
but the solution is simple:
If lawyers focused on giving
clients the simplified experience
they wanted, their clients would
be happier, more likely to
engage with a lawyer, and more
likely to encourage others
to do so as well.*

—

”

Now Available

The Blueprint for Success in a Changing Legal Marketplace



"Deeply insightful, practical, and engaging, this book is the definitive clarion call for law firms to become relentlessly client-centered."

PROFESSOR RICHARD SUSSKIND OBE, author of *Tomorrow's Lawyers*

Get Your Copy Today

amazon

BARNES&NOBLE