

Nearly three-fourths of unhappy law clients cite poor communications as #1 issue in online reviews

A nationwide study by Vanguard Communications finds client complaints about unreturned calls & emails dominate negative Google reviews of lawyers & law firms.



DENVER, CO, UNITED STATES, July 29, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Results of a nationwide study find that lawyers hoping to boost their reputations and new business volume should focus on a single word that makes all the difference to legal clients – call, as in “impossible to get a return phone call.”

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Clients not only want frequent updates on their cases – they want them delivered courteously and not from underinformed law firm underlings. Anything else feels disrespectful.”

Ron Harman King, JD, MS, CEO

A survey of nearly 20,000 Google reviews of attorneys and law firms revealed that among the harshest complaints about legal services, nearly three-quarters of displeased reviewers (73.9%) cited at least one of the top 10 most used words – all of which indicated dissatisfaction with both the quantity and quality of communications with their attorneys.

Online data suggest that law firms fare much worse than healthcare providers in communications skills. According

to an earlier Vanguard study, a much lower 53% of patients’ customer-service complaints related to communications.

In the attorney reviews, the word call appeared in more than one-third (36.2%) of the total one-star and two-star reviews (out of a maximum of five stars, indicating the least satisfaction).

That four-letter word was followed in frequency by the words unprofessional, rude, email, speak, contact, talk, professional, clear, and respond, rounding out the top 10 most used words.

“Respect is the big takeaway issue,” said [Ron Harman King](#), JD, MS, CEO of Vanguard Communications, a 31-year-old digital marketing and management consulting firm for attorneys

and physicians.

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A common complaint was that law firm clerical staff returned client phone calls and emails in an impatient tone and were often insufficiently knowledgeable about their cases to address their questions satisfactorily.

Vanguard staff evaluated 19,324 Google reviews of law firms in the largest U.S. cities in the 10 states with the densest concentration of attorneys on a per capita basis, plus the District of Columbia.

Perhaps most encouraging to the legal profession, clients generally rate their experiences with attorneys and firms favorably. Approximately four out of five reviewers (79.0%) gave four and five stars to attorneys and firms. This ratio bests that of patient reviews of doctors in an earlier study by Vanguard in which only 66% of reviewers gave four and five stars.

Among the cities surveyed, Trenton, New Jersey, earned the lowest share of four and five stars, at 70.0% of the total, while Boston scored the most pleased legal clients, at 87.3%.

A world-cloud analysis of the results, as well as other findings, is viewable at VanguardCommunications.net/lawyer-reviews-poor-communications.

About Vanguard Communications

Founded in 1994, Vanguard Communications provides marketing and management consulting services to healthcare and legal practices, with a strategy focused on public education guaranteed to bring new patients and clients to physicians and attorneys in private practices, as well as in nonprofit, university, and hospital settings. Through its LawMarketLink and MedMarketLink programs, Vanguard combines the disciplines of online and offline PR, strategic marketing and information technology for professional services practitioners coast to coast.

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