

Connecting the Dots and Data to Capture New Business

Intapp and The Legal Sales and Service Organization Marketing and Business Development Survey Results Show Firms Planning Technology Investments to Unify Data



Introduction

Intapp and the Legal Sales and Service Organization (LSSO) recently surveyed marketing and business development executives at midsize and large law firms to determine how they are approaching business development and “sales.” The results were illuminating: 90% of those surveyed reported that their firms utilize a decentralized marketing and business development model – an approach that largely disperses efforts and teams across an array of practice groups, industries, and client categories.


Survey results also revealed a divide in perceived ownership for strategic planning and execution; around a quarter of respondents reported feeling influential – but not responsible – for strategic planning, whereas the majority felt partially or mostly responsible.

Strategy execution responses showed the opposite: Nearly all respondents believed that they were responsible for a successful rollout. However, only a third of respondents who reported responsibility for the rollout said they have a seat at management committee meetings.

With partners filling critical client-facing roles around lead management and business development, it’s not surprising that more than half of survey respondents reported infrequent or nonexistent face time with clients, even though nearly all stated that managing client relationships was a key function of their jobs.

Survey results also illuminated the importance of a client-centric approach to business development. With nearly three-quarters of new business originating from existing clients, it’s clear that a direct line of communication between marketing and business development staff and client contacts is vitally important.

Although key clients are driving a significant volume of new business across the board, less than half of respondents reported having a key-client program in place to support growth efforts, which presents untapped opportunity for marketing and business development teams to increase revenue and scale the firm.



Less than half of respondents reported a formalized sales process in place at their firms, which explains why a majority of respondents reported being categorized as in the early stages of Gartner’s [sales operations maturity model](#), with the majority positioned as being in the “Anticipate” or “React” stage.

With respect to tracking ROI, the survey results showed encouraging improvement longitudinally. Whereas results from a similar survey Intapp conducted with Calibrate Legal in 2018 showed that nearly all respondents said their firms were **not** tracking ROI, our recent survey results indicate that nearly half of respondents are now tracking ROI, which is an encouraging sign.

For the firms collecting ROI data, three-quarters are tracking win/loss metrics on RFPs and pitches. We also witnessed a modest expansion of tracked metrics to include Net Promoter Score (NPS), client visits, referrals, and time, which bodes well for continuous improvement.

Although business development and marketing professionals feel connected to their core constituents — lawyers and partners — by proxy of the work they do, these professionals also say that strengthening relationships with these stakeholders would benefit the firm positively.

With respect to process, respondents report a divide between the marketing and business development group and risk and compliance teams, with three-quarters suggesting that a stronger link between these functions would lead to better outcomes. Not surprisingly, respondents also cited a lack of access to risk and compliance data as a key pain point, which suggests that unifying the data would help connect the processes. Similarly, although marketing and business development staff report that they feel most connected to clients, lawyers, and partners, they believe that they would benefit from stronger connections with finance, pricing, and knowledge management.

Overall, marketing and business development professionals believe that improving connectivity across firm functional areas will most significantly impact profitability, growth, and client satisfaction.

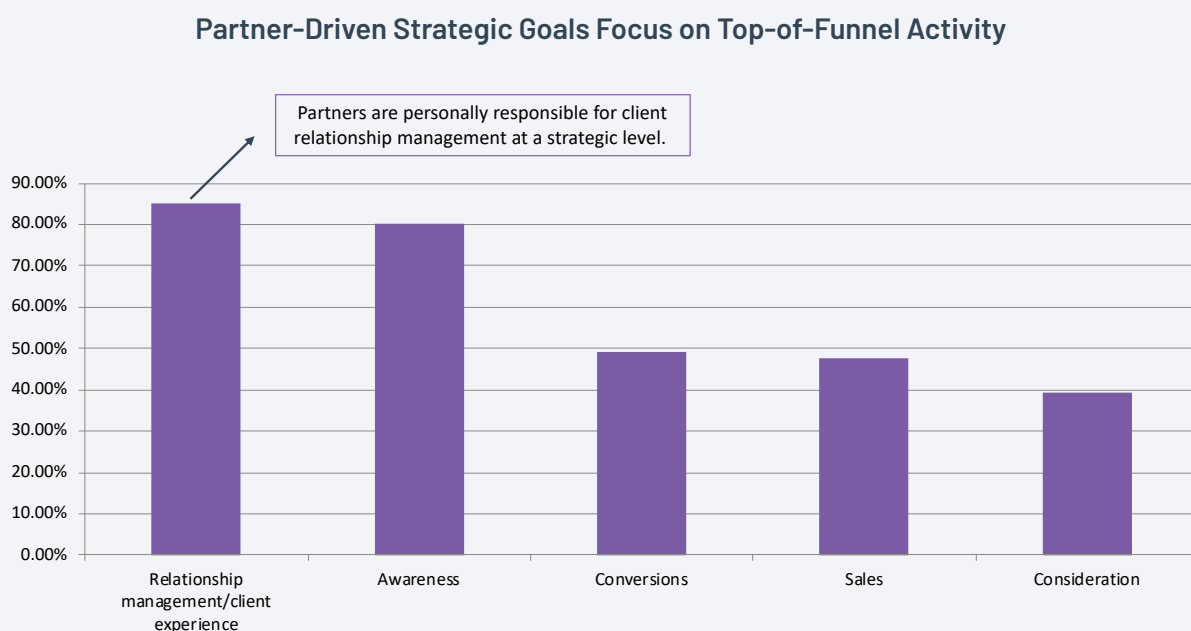
The data also suggests organizational misalignment in that marketing and business development staff — who are evaluated on their ability to manage client relationships and execute against strategy — are excluded from crucial client interactions and strategic planning sessions. With more than half of respondents reporting that their firms have no key-client program in place, in conjunction with a dearth of established sales methodologies and tracking protocols, it’s clear that there’s plenty of opportunity for increased maturity in the sales and marketing function, an issue that can, to an extent at least, be addressed by closing technology gaps.

This report will address the following topics:

- Misalignment between influence over strategy and responsibility for execution
- Development and management of successful key-client programs
- Data capture for key sales metrics that drive continuous improvement
- Strategic technology investments to meet the moment

Bridging the Influence Gap Between Strategic Planning and Tactical Execution

With respect to marketing and business development strategic objectives, firms largely focus on top-of-funnel activities, with partners on the hook for lead management and business development.

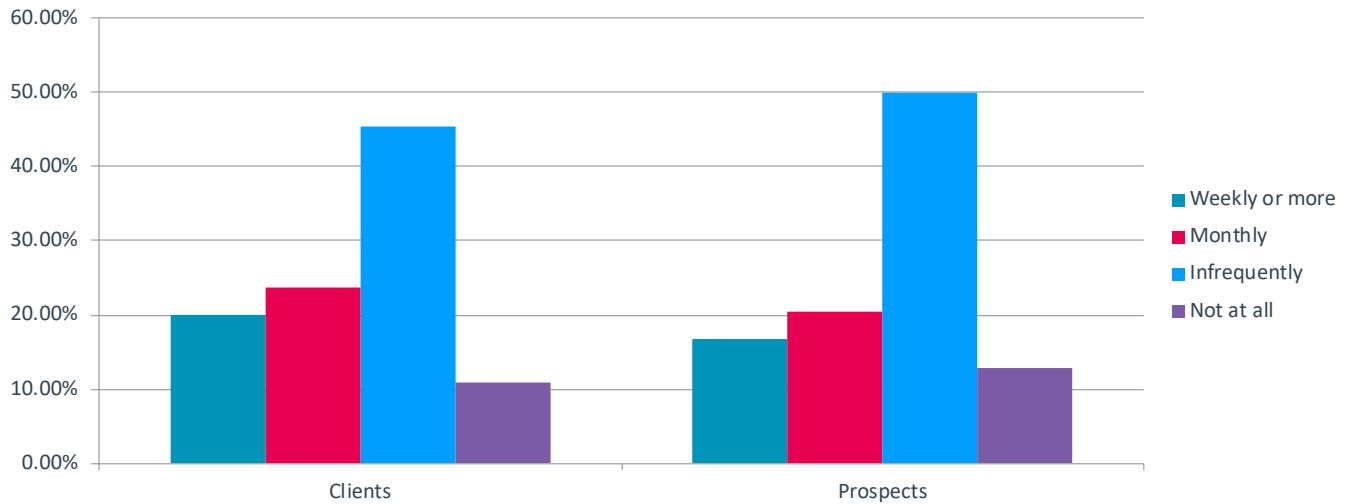


Because partners are personally responsible, at a strategic level, for relationship management, client experience, and business development activities, it's challenging for marketing and business development professionals – who are responsible for execution of the growth strategy – to secure a seat on the firm's management committee.

Although firms evaluate their marketing and business development professionals' performance against key performance indicators (KPIs) for client growth, the data suggests that the majority have infrequent or no contact with clients and prospects.

Marketing and BD Professionals Have Minimal Contact with Clients and Prospects

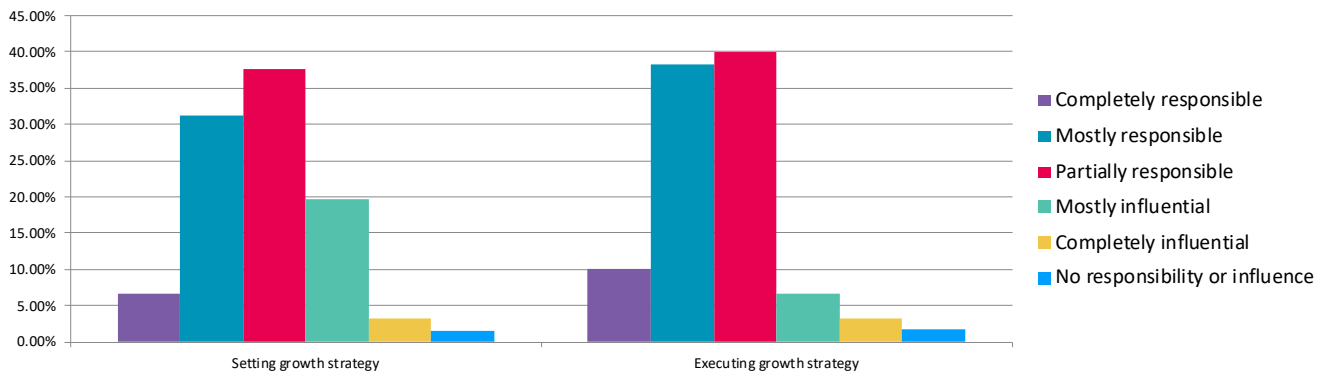
How frequently do you have direct contact with clients and prospects?



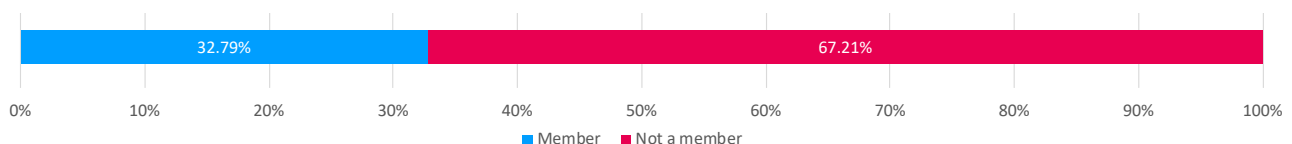
For marketing and business development professionals, the influence gap between strategic planning and execution culminates in the conundrum that they bear the onus of responsibility for outcomes but exert minimal influence on the inputs.

Marketing and BD Participation in Strategic Planning and Execution

Which of the following best describes your involvement in strategic planning and execution?



Marketing and BD Membership on the Management Committee



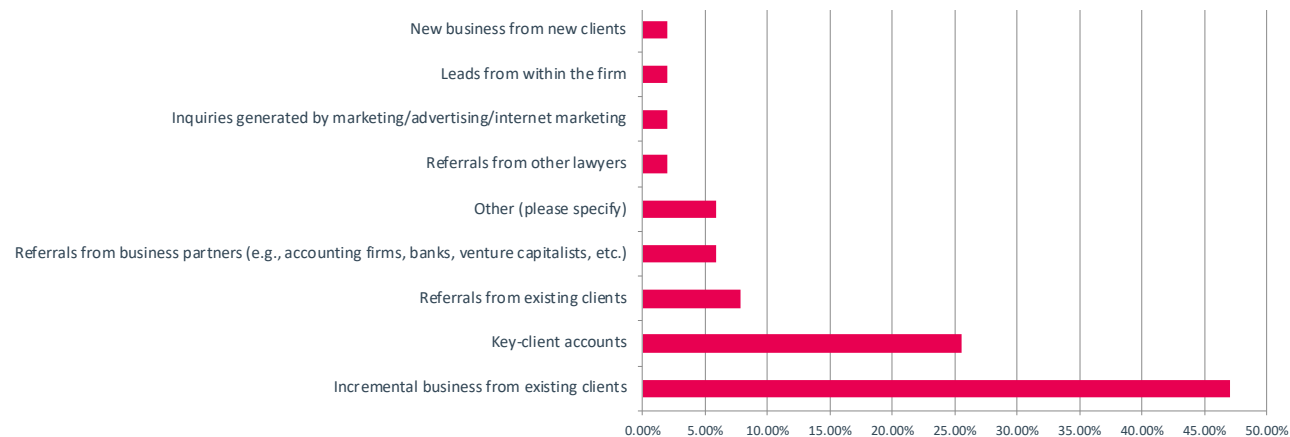
With marketing and business development professionals largely sidelined during strategic planning and client-facing activities, firms miss out not only on key feedback from the field, but also the chance to leverage their marketing and business development talent pool to forge deeper relationships with clients — particularly key clients — to surface new and incremental opportunities. Further, when firms unduly burden fee earners with nonbillable marketing and business development activities rather than empowering the professionals who are hired to perform these functions, utilization and profitability take a hit.

Increasing Revenue and Firm Growth via Key-Client Programs

It’s no secret to legal business development teams that existing clients present a lucrative source of new business. This reality spotlights the importance of adopting a client-centric approach to keep the pipeline filled and flowing.

Existing Clients Are the Best Source of New Business

What is your single best source of new business?

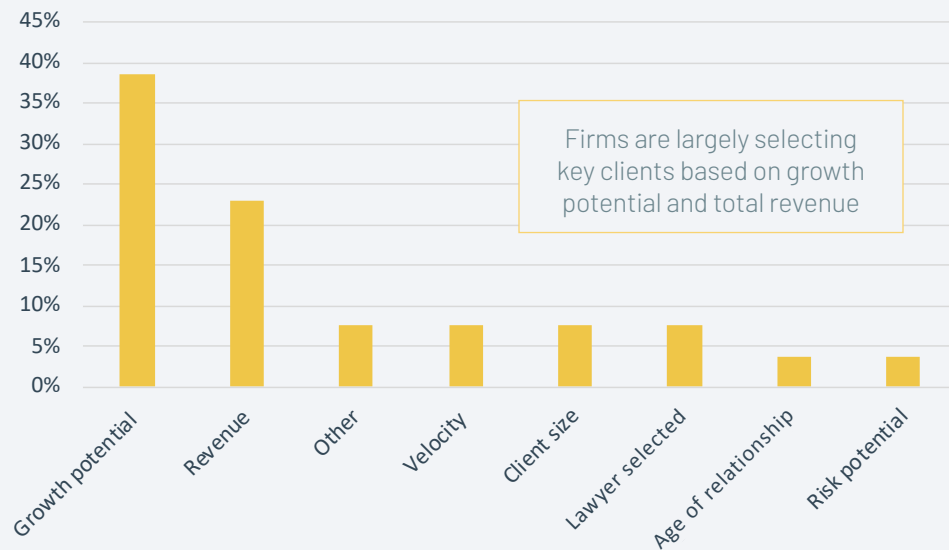


When we dove deeper into survey data supporting the notion that 72% of new business originates from existing clients, we learned that respondents attributed a full 25% of new business to key clients. That said, only 41% of respondents reported having a key-client program in place, revealing opportunity ripe for the picking.

For the 41% of respondents whose firms already have key-client programs in place, the data shows that firms are using growth potential and revenue as the primary criteria for selecting key clients. As we would expect, firms vary in the ways that they design the framework for their key-client programs.

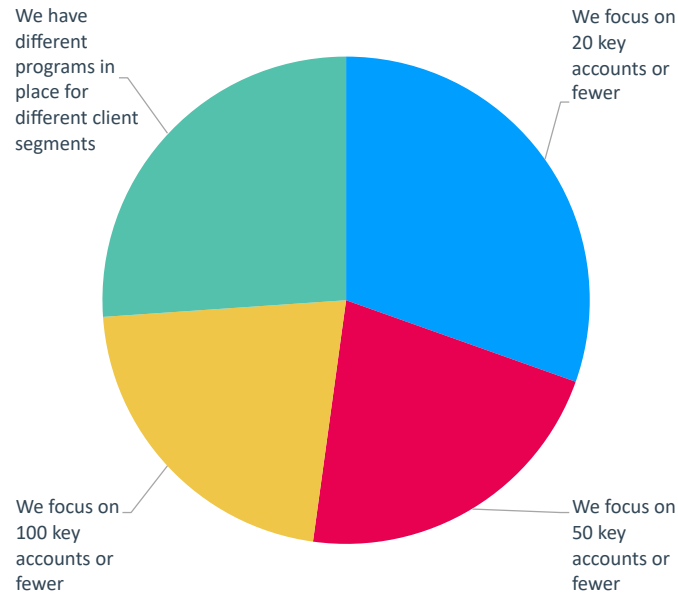
Defining Key-Client Accounts

Selection Criteria



Approach to Managing Key-Client Programs

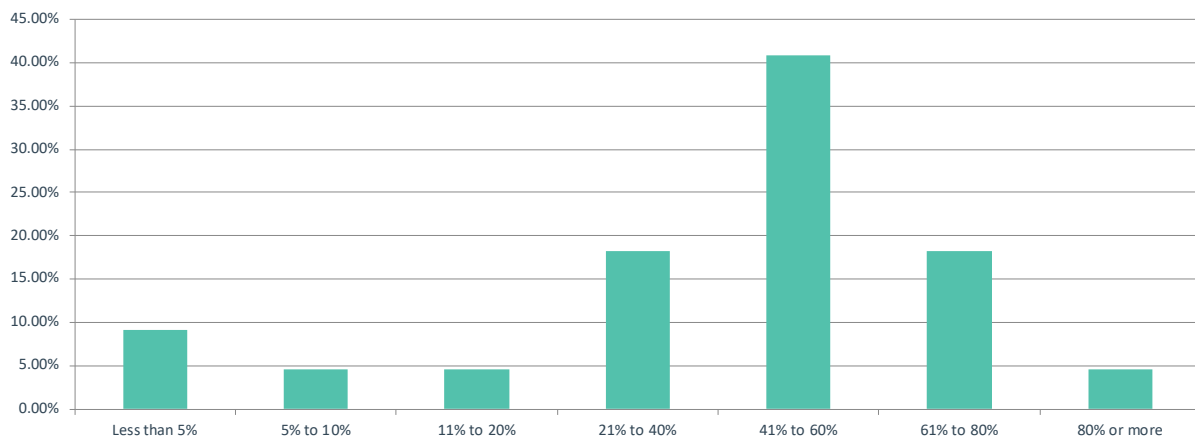
Quantity of Key Clients



With more than 40% of respondents stating that roughly half of their revenue is attributable to key clients, it's clear that key-client programs can represent a central piece of the revenue pie. Respondents also reported a highly favorable return on investment for their key-client programs, with nearly half stating the growth rate for key-client accounts outpaces the firm's overall growth rate.

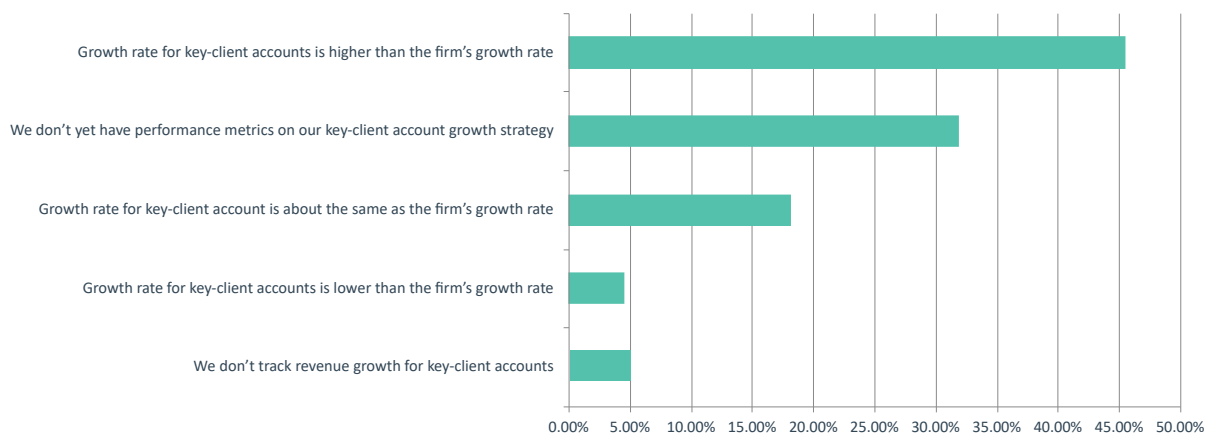
Key Clients are Central to Revenue

What percentage of your firm's annual revenue is attributable to key clients?



Key-Client Accounts Are Worth the Investment

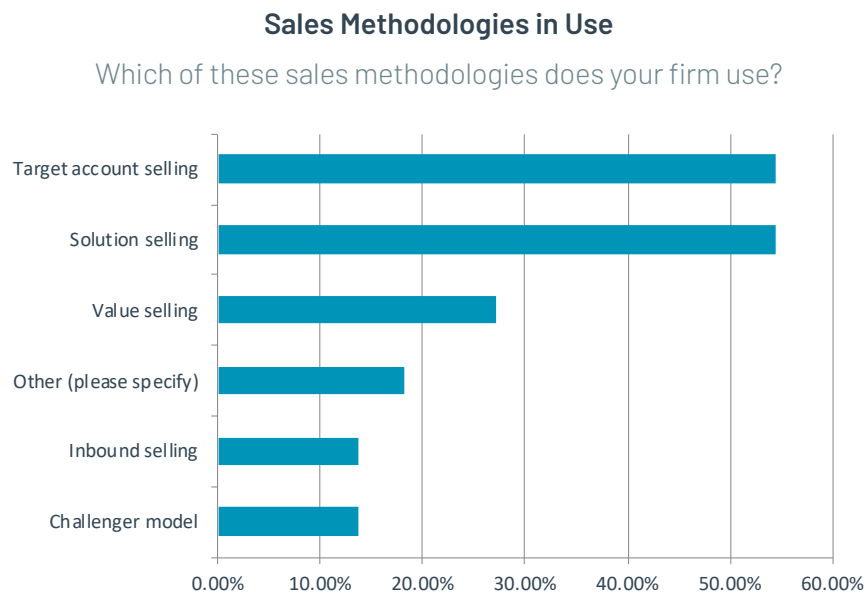
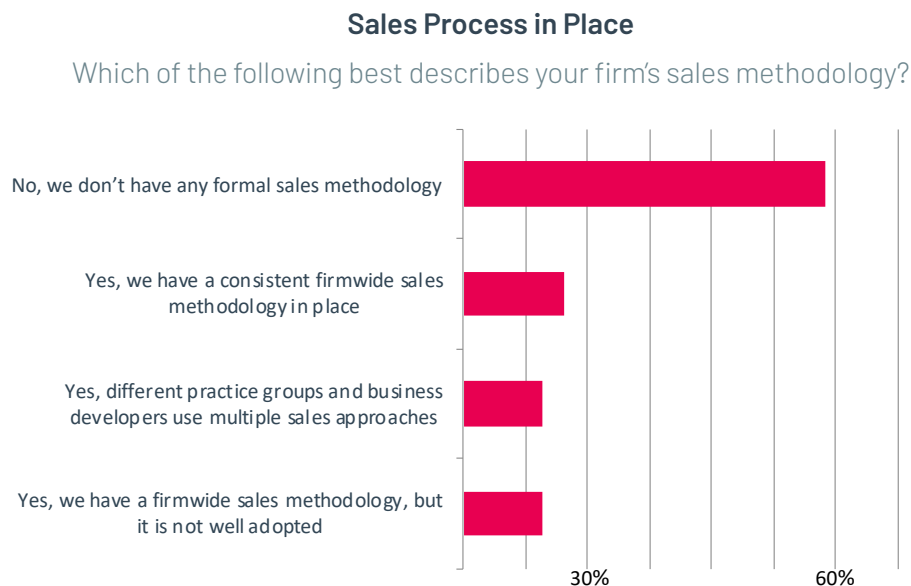
How does the revenue growth rate for key clients track to overall firm growth rate?



The most [effective key-client programs](#) focus on tightening alignment not only internally within the firm, but also externally with key clients. When thoughtfully designed and supported by the right technologies, key-client programs can significantly increase revenue and accelerate firm growth.

Streamlining Sales Processes and Tracking Key Metrics

With 58% of respondents reporting that their firms have no formal sales methodology in place, it's clear that many firms are flying blind, unable to focus their efforts on activities that maximize revenue. Aside from the 16% of respondents reporting firmwide adoption of a consistent sales methodology, firms are struggling with disjointed processes and adoption resistance.

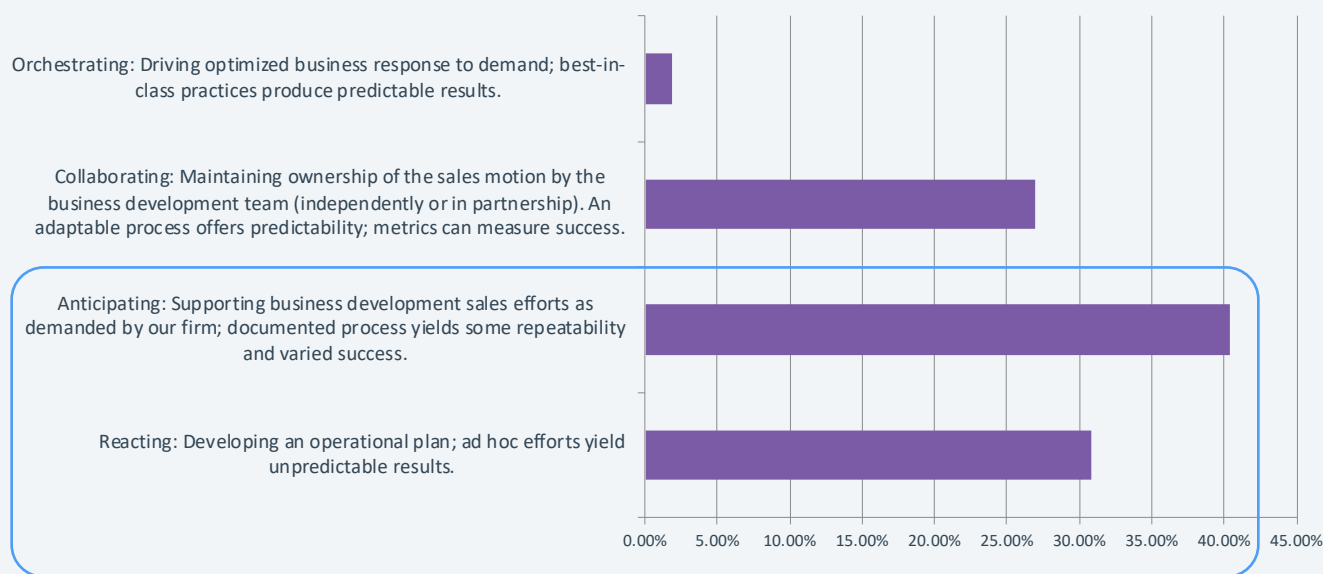


For respondents who report having a formalized sales methodology at their firms, the majority reported a focus on target-account selling and solution selling.

Not surprisingly, firms are navigating their way to sales maturity, with the clear majority of firms indicating a process that would fall into the React or Anticipate categories of the Gartner sales operations maturity model. For the 31% of respondents that reported a process consistent with the “React” category, firms have developed an operational plan, but have no systemized way to yield reliable results. For the 40% of respondents that reported a process that aligns with the “Anticipate” category, their firms have mandated sales protocols, documented processes, some repeatability, but mixed results.

Firms Are Early on the Path to Sales Maturity

Which of the Gartner categories for degree of sales maturity best describes your firm?



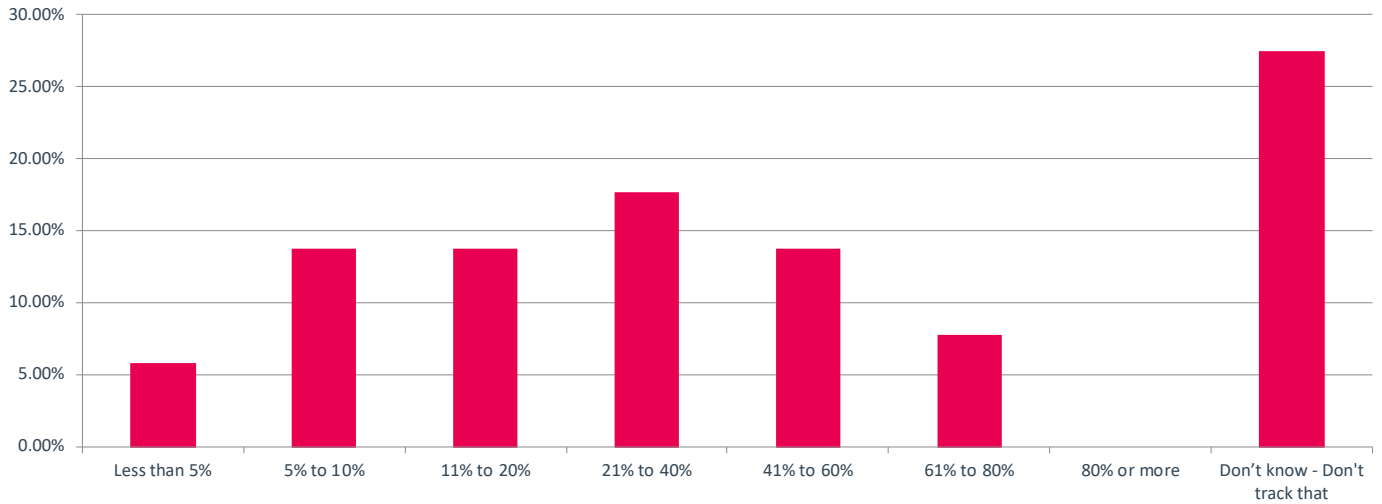
Without a formalized sales process, RFPs and pitches are simply won or lost; there is no way to capture the context in which specific activities are succeeding or failing. Similarly, without tracking capabilities in place, there is no way for firms to capture the longitudinal data required to develop a robust sales infrastructure that builds competitive advantage.

The data also suggests significant room for improvement around sales tracking and analysis across the board, starting with tracking the origin of RFPs and pitch requests and whether or not they involve existing clients. More than a quarter of respondents reported that they don’t track the proportion of RFPs and pitch requests from existing clients.

In a nutshell, survey findings show that many firms have significant room for improvement on their sales methodologies and tracking capabilities.



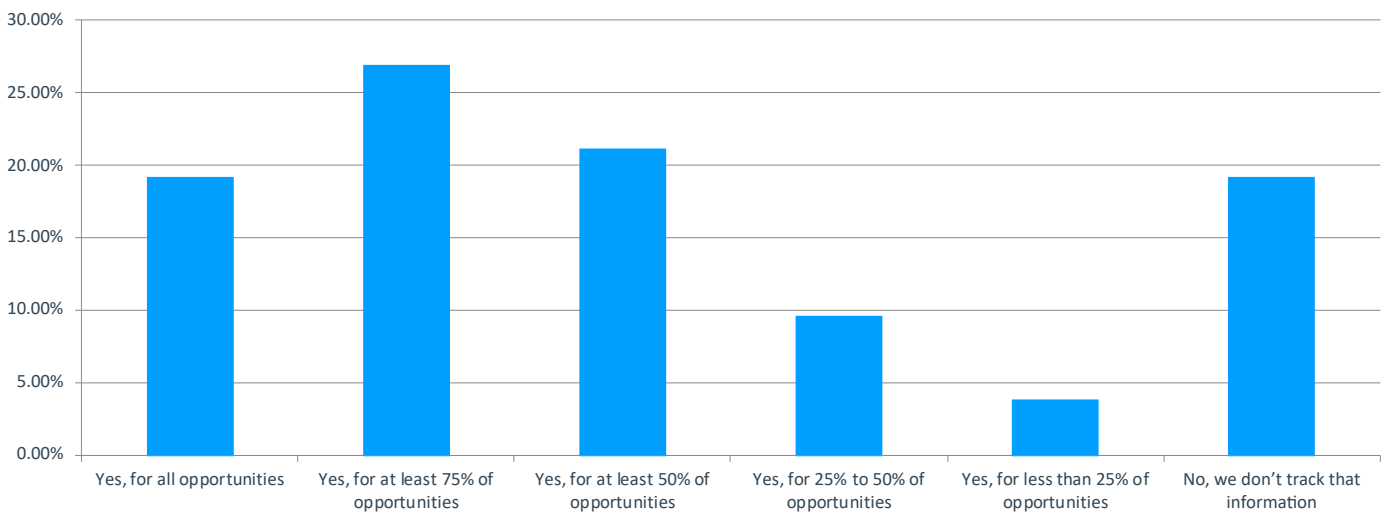
Proportion of RFP and Pitch Requests Originating from Existing Clients



With respect to tracking wins and losses, firms are all over the map on data capture; only 19% track all opportunities.

Firms Are Dispersed Across the Spectrum on Tracking Wins and Losses

Which of the following best describes the level of tracking your firm performs on wins and losses?

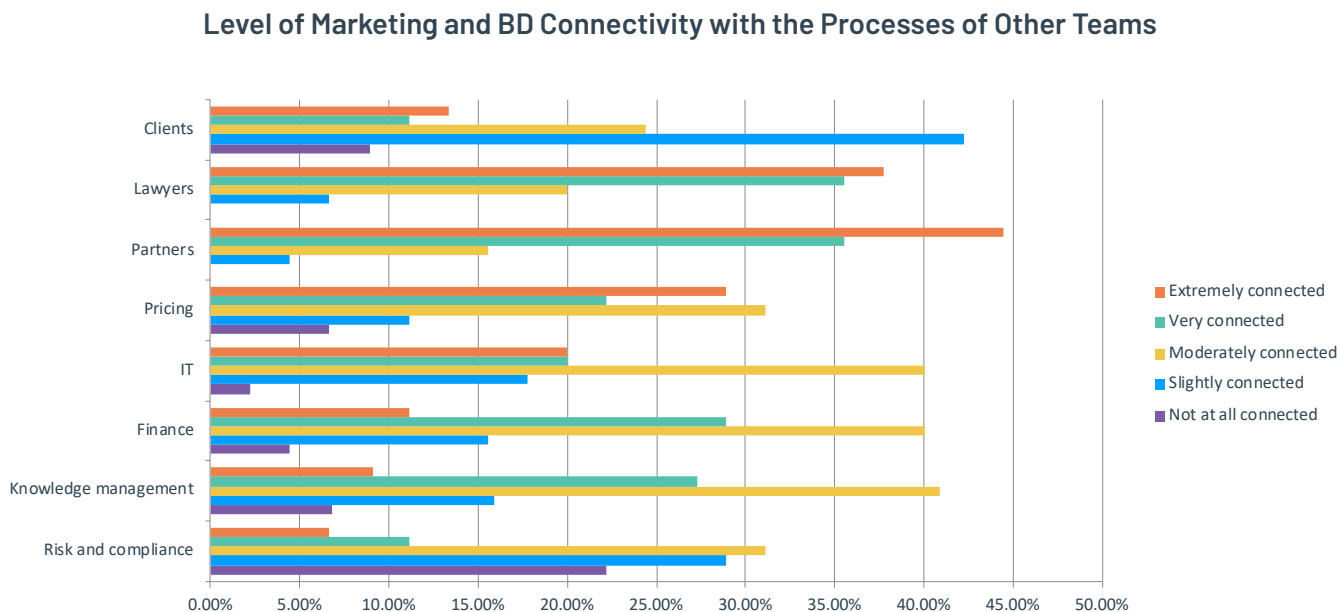


Further, although 42% of respondents reported tracking RFP and pitch wins and losses, the vast majority lack visibility into other key metrics – including revenue and ROI – which makes it impossible for them to properly gauge and communicate the effectiveness of marketing and business development activities to the broader organization. Firms that implement the right technologies to capture and analyze this data are poised to enjoy the advantages of not only reliable reporting, but also improved business agility, which ultimately leads to better outcomes and competitive advantage.

Unifying Data and Connecting Firmwide Processes

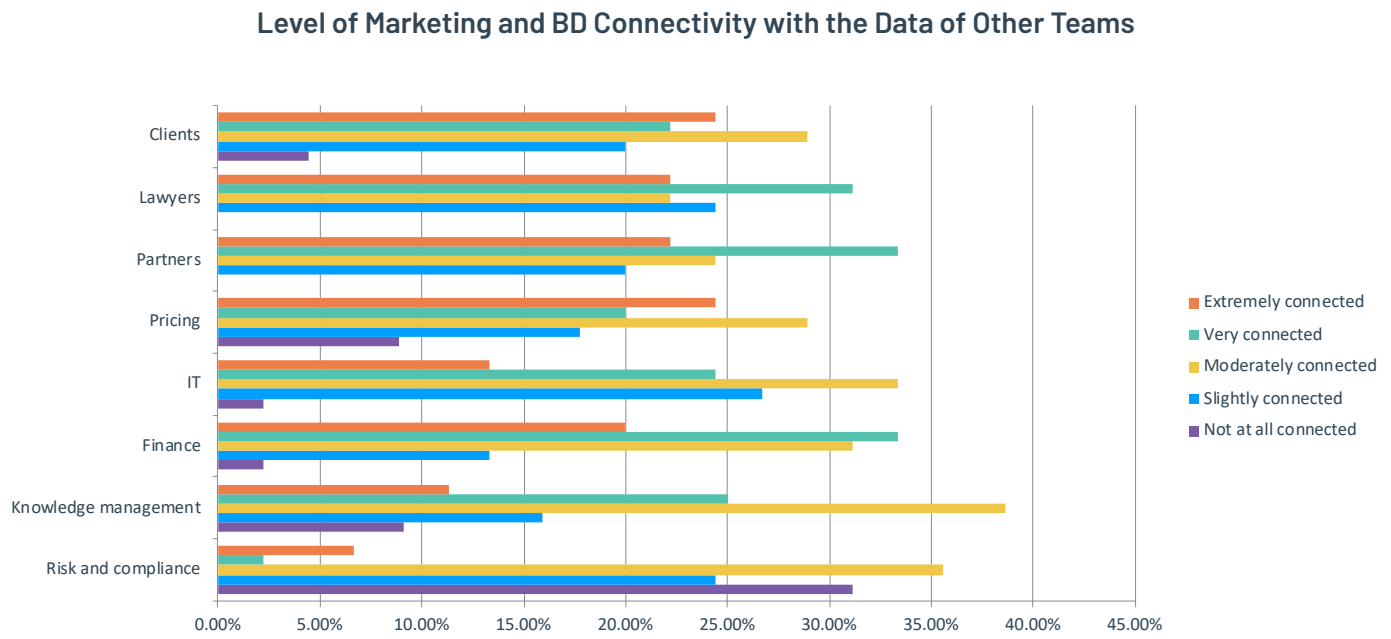
The survey captured data regarding respondents’ perceived level of connection of their marketing and business development function across three key areas: processes, data, and professionals.

With respect to processes, the data shows that marketing and business development teams feel most connected to lawyers and partners, and moderately connected to knowledge management, finance, and IT. Not surprisingly, the data shows stronger results in the perceived level of connection to pricing, which is attributable to its nexus with business development.

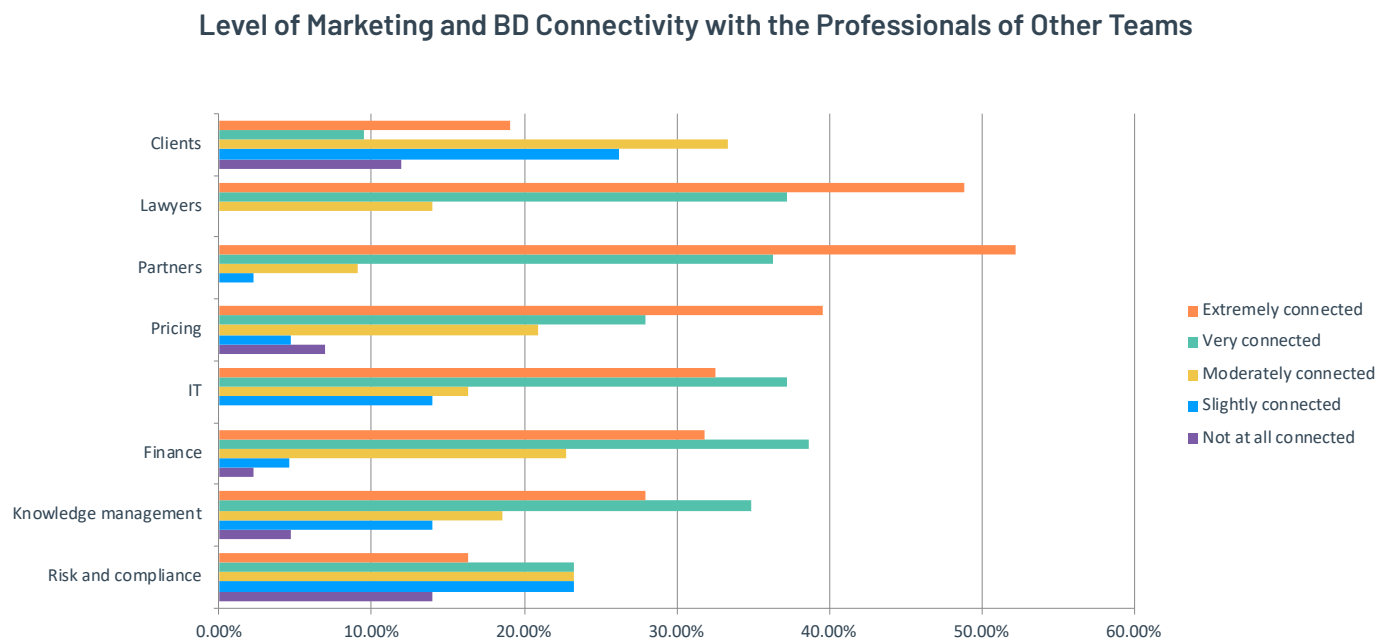


When asked about perceived connection to data, respondents indicated similar sentiments. Although they reported a disconnect with risk and compliance data, respondents largely reported feeling connected to pricing, partners, lawyers, and client data, and moderately connected to IT, finance, and knowledge management data.

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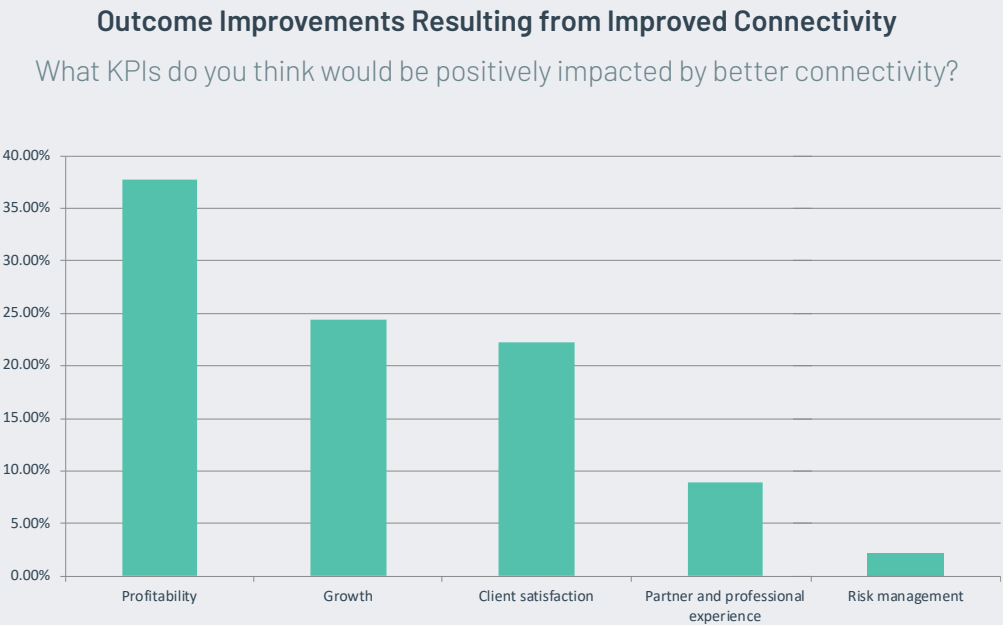


Overall, professionals feel more connected to other professionals across the board, including risk and compliance teams. A majority feel very connected or extremely connected with their direct peers.



When asked about areas for improvement, respondents said that better data connection between the marketing and business development teams and the finance, pricing, and knowledge management functions would be most impactful. For processes, risk and compliance surfaced as the first priority, with all other areas ranging between 40% to 50%, indicating that respondents believe that there is room for improvement. Not surprisingly, more than 60% of respondents believe that partners, lawyers, and clients would benefit from being better connected.

When asked about anticipated improved outcomes resulting from better connection, respondents reported profitability, firm growth, and client satisfaction as the top three factors, though some respondents reported all of the above, as indicated in the chart below.



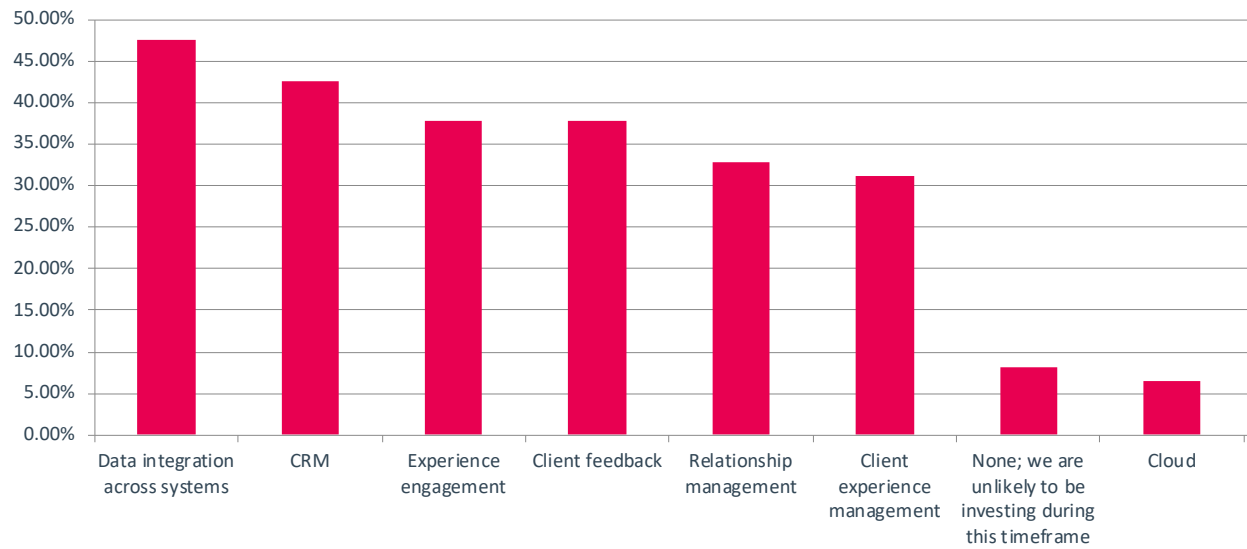
Overall, survey respondents believe that their firms would benefit from better connectivity across the board, and that these improvements would lead to improved performance against mission-critical KPIs: profitability, growth, and client satisfaction.

Making Strategic Technology Investments

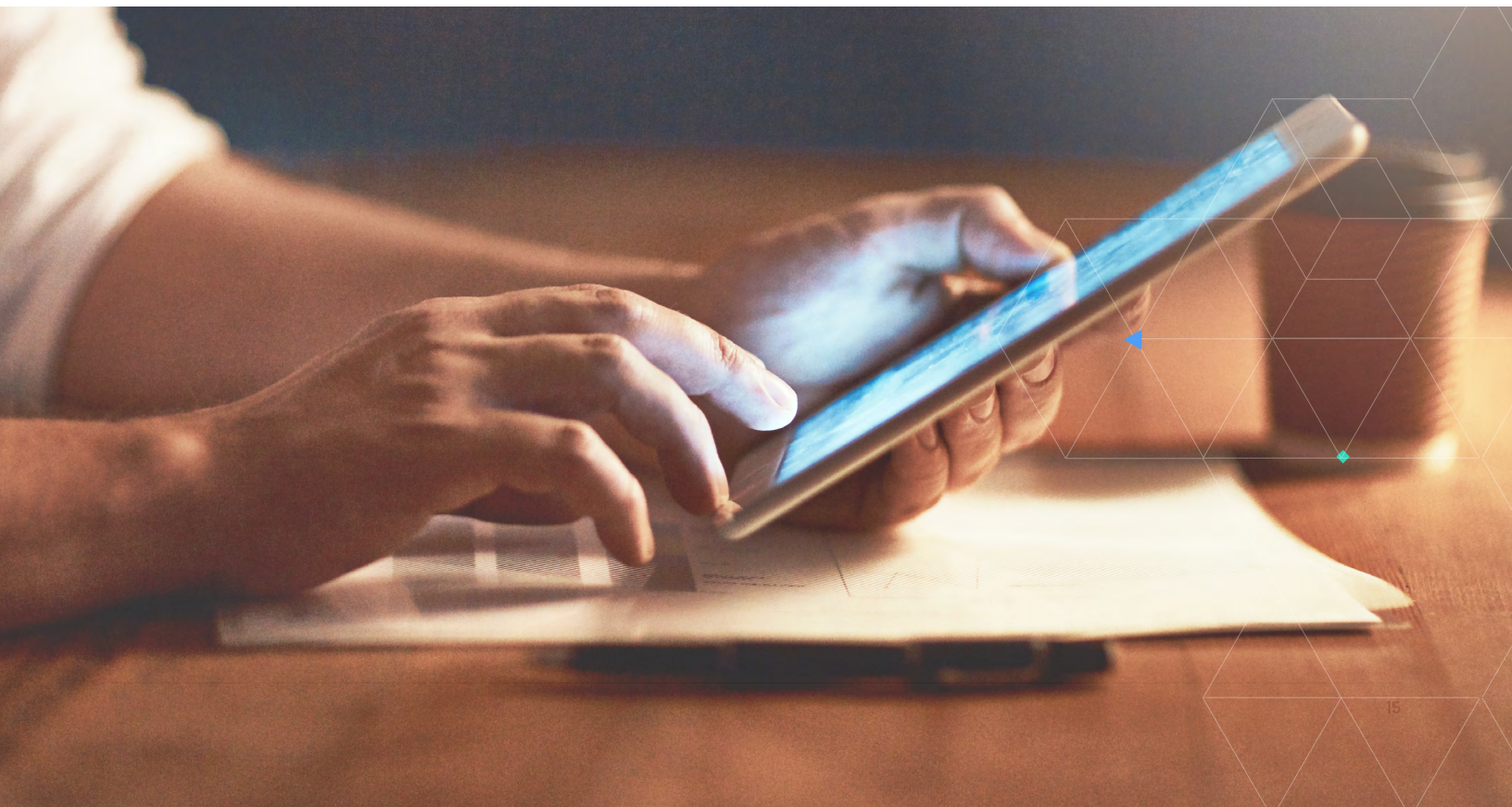
The survey results indicate that firms are getting ready to flip the switch on strategic technology investments during the coming 12 months. With 48% of respondents reporting plans to invest in cross-systems data integration, unified data has emerged as the key area of focus across the legal industry generally. With respect to investments in marketing and business development tools specifically, respondents report that their firms are allocating technology funds to CRM, experience management, client feedback, relationship management, and client experience management.

Planned Technology Investments Over the Next 12 months

Firms Are Investing in Technologies to Support the Marketing and BD Function



Interestingly, only 8% of respondents reported that their firms had no plans to invest in technology during the 12-month timeframe, which suggests that firms are reaching a tipping point on unifying their data.





Conclusion

When applying technology and systems to seize opportunities and solve problems, unified data serves as the backbone of the connected firm. Most firms struggle with siloed data, poor data quality, and data misalignment, all of which significantly hamper the marketing and business development function. Our suggested approach to solving this problem is simple: Start by unifying your data so that you can connect your processes, which in turn enables your people.

At Intapp, we believe in the power of the connected firm because we've witnessed firsthand the results firms have achieved by making strategic investments in data integration and marketing and business development solutions. We invite you to [learn more](#) about how your firm can overcome the challenges in unifying data, processes, and people — and seize incremental marketing and business development opportunities.

