



# Family Law Insights Report

Volume 1    Client Preference and Behaviour  
Australia, June 2019

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More than 10,900 Australians have used Settify in the course of engaging with their chosen family law firms. That allows insight into the largest and most comprehensive data set of family law clients yet, and surveys them at the precise time that they choose their lawyers and start their matter.

This is the first report in Settify's multi-part series, and sets out data on client preferences and behaviours:

- What factors do clients find most important when selecting their lawyers?
- How many lawyers do they consider?
- At what point do they make up their mind to engage a firm?

This is a large, powerful dataset, and a particularly interesting one for those who manage or work in private family law firms. The dataset is different to that compiled by Courts, the ABS, or most public sources – it represents potential clients of commercial family law practices.

Many of the findings in this report will confirm your intuitions. Some of the data is illuminating, and surprising. Before you read on, try to guess how a large aggregate of clients would rank the following priorities in terms of their relative importance:

 <b>I don't want to spend much money on a lawyer (price is a very significant factor)</b>	 <b>I will pay to achieve the best possible outcome in my legal matter</b>
 <b>I want to understand the legal process I am engaging in</b>	 <b>I want personal service</b>
 <b>I want the process to be quick and easy</b>	 <b>I feel apprehensive about engaging a lawyer, and want to be put at ease</b>

The provenance of our data, our methods for collecting it, how it has been used, and how the confidentiality of individuals and firms has been safeguarded, is set out on pages 7 and 8 below.

We hope this report provides meaningful insight, and generates actionable strategies around marketing to clients, how you engage with them, and how you assist them to get started on their matter.



Max Paterson  
CEO and Principal Family Lawyer

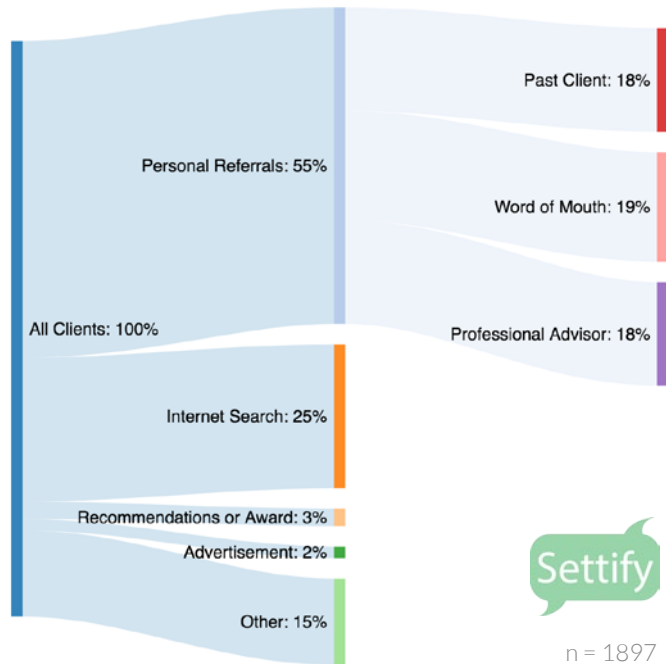


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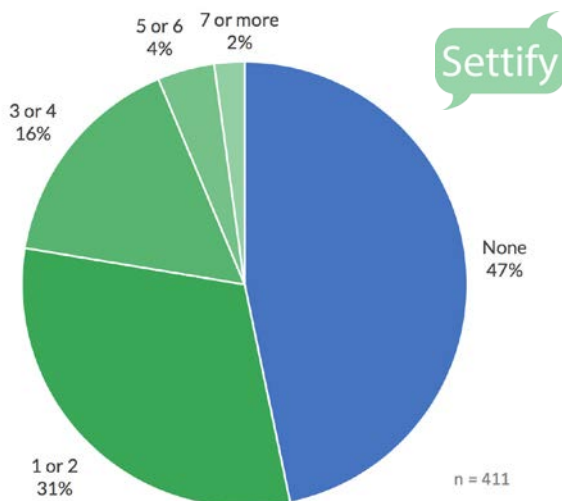
## When do clients choose their firm?

Across our sample of Settify users who went on to engage lawyers, we see that many clients have received a personal recommendation or referral.



But it would be wrong to assume that at the point in time when a client is referred to you, they are inevitably going to engage you.

We asked clients how many other firms' websites they were looking at when they made a decision to engage the firm they ultimately went with. The results are quite startling:



The majority of clients (53%) will research more than one firm before they make a decision about which firm they will engage.

When we break that number down by referral source, we see that most internet searchers will look at multiple websites. More surprisingly, of clients who have been personally referred to a particular firm, nearly half will still look at other firm's websites.

- 73%** of internet searchers...
- 49%** of referrals from past clients or word of mouth...
- 41%** of referrals from professional advisors...

...will look at at least 1 other firm's website.

n = 353

Clients use Settify after they have looked at a firm's website and clicked a 'Get Started' button or similar, and before they meet with their lawyer. But what impact does Settify make? We asked clients "Had you already made up your mind to engage [the firm you ultimately engaged] before starting this online process?"

Yes (44%) **No (56%)**

n = 404

Thus, when we look at clients who use Settify, and then go on to become fee paying clients of firms, we see that more than half were 'converted' during that online process.

### Conclusions

Personal recommendation and referral remain key drivers of new business. However, it is not accurate to think that recommendations are sufficient. Most clients look around, even those who have been referred.

The 'purchase decision' is often not made before clients visit your website, nor even after they have clicked 'get started.' Thus, firms should seriously consider how they take clients from 'interested' to 'actually engaged.'



# What do clients want?

Every client has particular needs, interests and priorities. When viewed at scale however, trends do emerge.

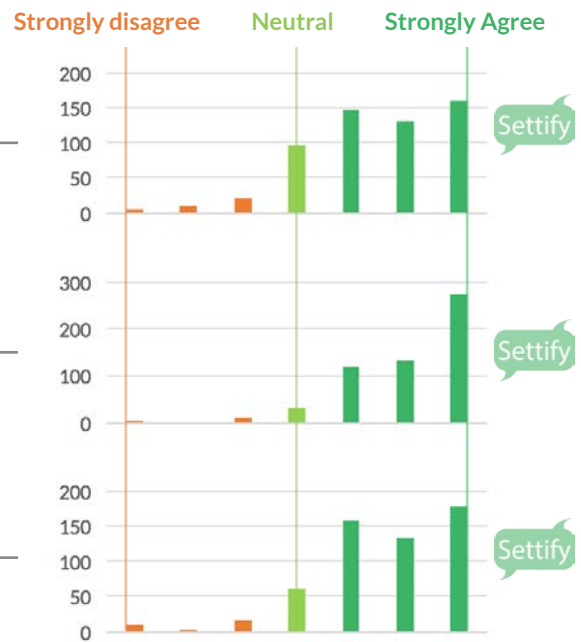
We tried to think of the main priorities that clients have when choosing their lawyers, and asked clients to rate those priorities from 1 (not important) to 5 (very important). How do you think they would rate? Here are the average answers, displayed as a leader board:



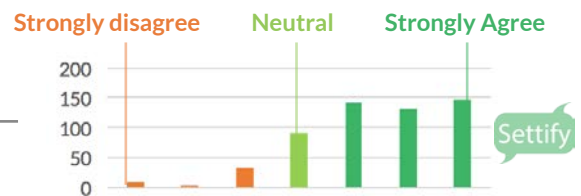
Settify n 422

## Client fulfilment via automation?

We wanted to see whether or not an online induction process can help to fulfil clients' top priorities, so we asked them if "this online process helped you to ... (fulfil the priorities on the left of this page)". Here are the number of respondents, and their answers, from 'strongly disagree' through to 'strongly agree'.



It seems unintuitive, but many clients felt that Settify "provided a personal service". This gives an interesting insight into what people consider 'personal,' given that they were not interacting with any people.



We were pleased (but not surprised) that clients reported that Settify "made it quick and easy to get started in their legal matter". The thing we're proudest of though, is that it helped clients to "understand the legal process" - their top rated priority.



## New client enquiry patterns

Many firms will hold their own data on the hours, days and months that enquiries come in. The following data may well fill in some of your gaps, and give an industry yardstick to compare by.

### Response time

How time-sensitive are enquiries? It turns out that a fast response makes a big difference. Enquiries 'decay' at quite an alarming rate.



Thus, slow response times could be decreasing your conversion rates by 23% or more. This figure compared the time gap between when firms are notified of new Settify enquiries, and when they accessed those records. If you find that interesting, look out for Edition 4, which will compare how firms convert enquiries into files, as that rate varies hugely between firms.

### When do clients come?

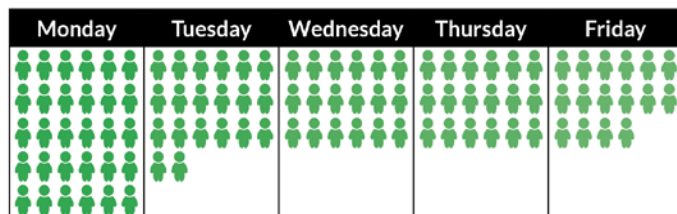


The above figures represent Settify enquiries. We do not have data on phone enquiries, which are presumably skewed towards business hours. The conclusion however, is that a significant proportion of clients want to engage outside of business hours.

### Monday, bloody Monday

Does Monday often feel busy? That's because, statistically speaking, it is. Particularly when you factor in the clients who have used Settify to make a start with

your firm over the weekend, an outsized proportion of your new enquiries will come in on a Monday.



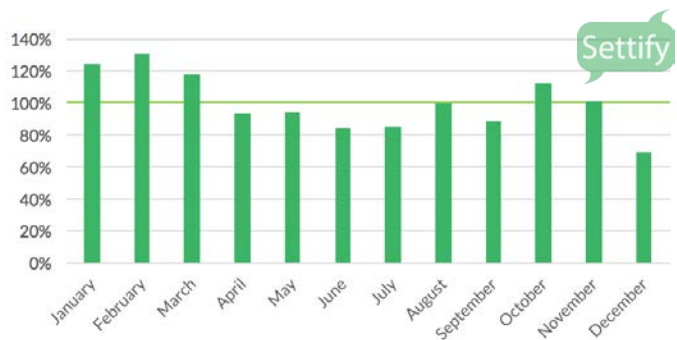
Settify n = 7,672

Perhaps it's worth beefing up your client intake capacity on Monday mornings, or have someone come in early? Whatever your strategy, the fact is that the pickings are greatest on Mondays.

### Enquiries across the year

Everyone knows that enquiries are seasonal. However, the true trends may give rise to some surprises.

The following figure was taken from 5,652 clients, where we could compare the number of enquiries month-on-month. We controlled for the number of days in each month, and expressed the variance away from a mean of 100. This is likely the richest source of data about new enquiry rates at private family law practices ever compiled.



n = 5,652

Firstly, it turns out that the famous January bump is actually slightly eclipsed in February. That was only made clear when we controlled for the fact that there are 3 more days in January - thus February sees the most enquiries per day across Australia.



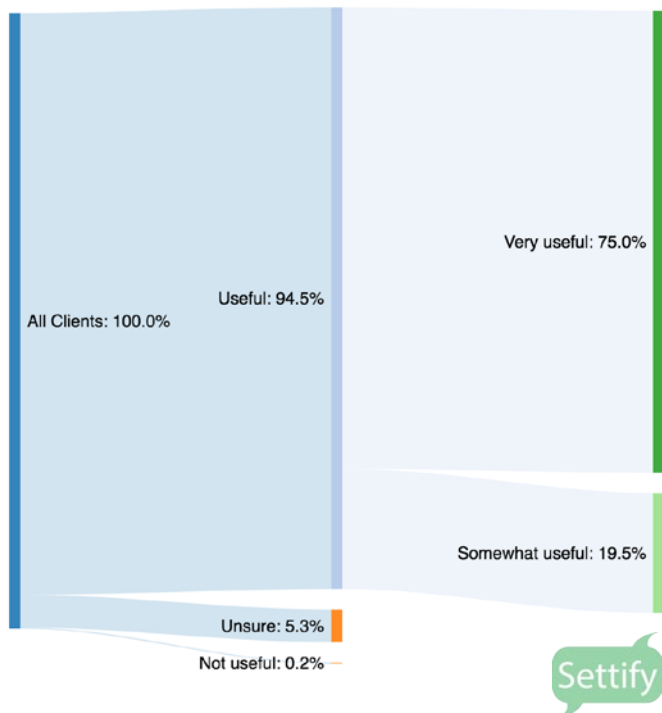
Secondly, the graph shows that December sees a drop of 31% below the mean, whereas January is 25% above, and February 31% above. Rather than Christmas precipitating separations, perhaps it just delays them? In any case, the first three months of the year clearly represent the strongest quarter, and a time for firms to focus on marketing.

Finally, an October bump? Perhaps it's because school holidays have just finished. Perhaps it's when the weather is getting hotter? Your team lost the grand final? Your team won the grand final? Settify has been adopted strongly in England, so once we have enough statistical power, we may be able to draw insights from the seasons, rather than just the 'Christmas effect'.

## Clients' feedback about using an online system

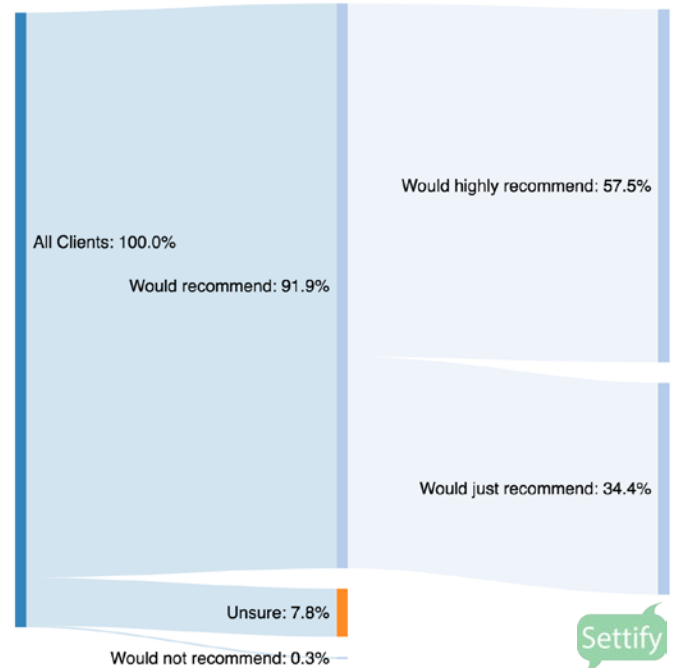
We asked three questions about what clients thought of the Settify experience. The results speak for themselves.

### How useful did you find this online service?



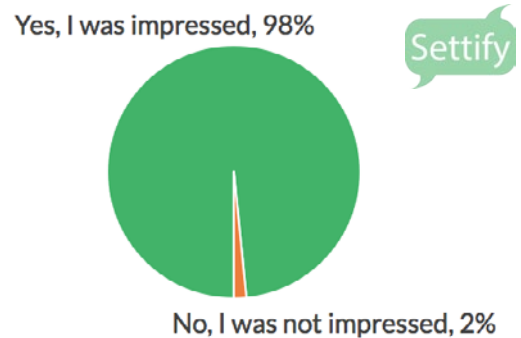
n = 704

### Would you recommend this online service to a friend in a similar situation?



n = 692

### Were you impressed that this online service was made available to you?



n = 693

Be aware: this is a self-fulfilling prophecy. Only clients who have chosen to use Settify via a firm's website, or via invitation, have been able to give their feedback. Clients who phone in or ignore the invite are not polled.

Well... that's the point of Settify. Smart firms should delight new clients who want to phone in, with an excellent telephone experience. Similarly, for clients who want to start online, there's Settify.



## About this dataset

It is worth pausing to consider the nature of the data in these reports.

In short, it is a large and powerful sample, but a very particular set. Our total sample size was 10,911 people. That is the number who have used Settify via firm's websites or by invitation, and actually requested an appointment with one of our partner firms. That's more than the capacity of Hisense arena.



But what does the sample represent? It is not representative of litigants in the Family Courts, or of divorcees generally. It is skewed away from legal aid clients. It ignores those who don't use the internet. It does, however, represent clients who seek assistance from commercial family lawyers, at the specific moment that they seek it.

The data in these reports has been drawn from three main sources:

- De-identified statistics on answers provided by 10,911 clients who have used Settify all the way through to submitting a request for a meeting with a Settify partner firm;
- An optional feedback questionnaire at the end of the Settify process, which has been answered by 757 clients who have completed the Settify induction;
- The metadata gathered from most other firm-facing events.

In graphs and charts throughout this report, N stands for the number of people in the underlying data set. Higher N values provide more statistical power and certainty.



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## What's next?

Please stay tuned. Over the coming months, Settify will release a series of reports like this one, each providing insights based on our large data set. The topics to look forward to are:

### What does the modern, tech-savvy client look like?

A report into the demographics, behaviour, and preferences of the modern client – providing an insight into the future of client service for the family law profession.

### Who is today's high net worth client?

We pull together insights from over 400 clients with asset pools worth \$5m to \$10m who have used Settify thus far. We compare and contrast with the 170 clients with \$10m+ in assets who have used Settify to engage lawyers.

### How does your firm compare?

We report on the range of firms' performance on key measures such as response times and conversion rates. We won't name names without prior permission, but if you have your own data (or ask us to confidentially tell you where you sit), then you can peg your position against your competitors on some vital metrics.

### Ask us anything

What do you want to know about our dataset? Or what do you want us to poll or measure in the coming year? Please email [contact@settify.com.au](mailto:contact@settify.com.au) with your query, or a report that you would like us to run. We will compile a report of the most interesting insights, and publish the questions we will answer exclusively for Settify's partner firms in 2020.

## Authorised use, privacy and confidentiality

### You're welcome to share

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Settify puts client privacy and confidentiality first. The data in this report was drawn from de-identified records, meaning that no personal information has been accessed or disclosed. We have ensured that all data sets are sufficiently large that no individual, or individual firm, might be identifiable.

Some firms have asked that their clients' data not to be used for reporting purposes, and those requests have been adhered to.

