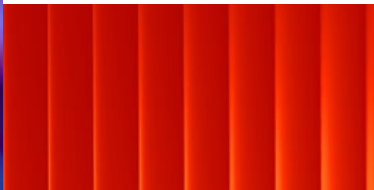


# Hello to Loyalty

The Accountancy Client Experience Report





## CENSUSWIDE

THE SURVEY CONSULTANTS

The research was conducted by Censuswide, among a sample of Senior decision-makers (aged 18+) within the accountancy sector in the UK. The data was collected between 30.06.2025 – 03.07.2025. Censuswide abides by and employs members of the Market Research Society and follows the MRS code of conduct and ESOMAR principles. Censuswide is also a member of the British Polling Council.

# Looking ahead to client experience in 2025 and beyond

The pressure on accountancy firms to balance client service with new business growth is higher than ever. Many are striving to sharpen up their client journey, while managing internal pressures, shifting expectations and digital transformation at the same time.

We surveyed hundreds of senior decision makers from across the UK to understand where firms are focusing their efforts – what’s working, what’s not, and where the biggest client experience gaps still exist.

The results show a profession that’s ambitious and aware. While firms are prioritising client growth, they’re also recognising the risk of inaction when it comes to improving service delivery. This is especially true as more clients expect fast, consistent, and joined-up communications at every stage.

Client service is no longer just a hygiene factor; **it’s a key growth driver.**

### This report uncovers:

- How firms are prioritising growth and retention
- Where service delivery is falling short
- The financial and reputational cost of poor experience
- How different regions and firm sizes compare
- What’s being done to bridge the client experience gap

We hope the insights offer valuable direction as you plan the year ahead and highlight opportunities to better serve clients while growing your firm sustainably.



# Money Penny is the UK’s #1 provider of client communications in the finance industry

Hundreds of accountancy professionals, including half of the Top 100, rely on Money Penny’s call and live chat solutions to enhance their client experience and ensure every enquiry is captured cost-effectively. Our experienced receptionists from our dedicated finance team are on hand to help firms build trust, improve retention and drive growth all while helping them stay responsive and one step ahead of client expectations.

- We provide firms with:
- Telephone Answering
  - Live Chat
  - Outsourced Switchboard
  - Microsoft Teams Integration
  - Lead Management Service
  - AI Voice Agent

## Supporting accountancy firms at every step of the client journey.



# Key priorities for firms



Growing the client base is firmly back on the agenda. This year, 39% of firms say attracting new clients is their top priority for the next 12 months – significantly ahead of any other focus. After a period of uncertainty and cautious spending, firms are stepping back into the market with renewed confidence and a clear appetite for growth.

But there's more to the story. A quarter of firms are prioritising revenue growth from existing clients, showing a more considered approach to client value. Meanwhile, 22% are focused on attracting and retaining talent – a key factor in delivering consistently high levels of service. Cost savings are still a consideration, but only 14% rank it as their main focus.

This mix of priorities shows a shift in mindset. Growth remains front and centre, but firms are increasingly aware that keeping clients happy and engaged is just as important as winning them in the first place.

Client expectations are higher than ever – especially when it comes to speed, communication, and consistency. Firms that chase new business without improving their service risk losing clients just as quickly as they win them. Growth might turn heads, but retention drives long-term results.

The most successful firms in 2025 are those that can do both: win new clients, and keep them. That means building strong internal teams, delivering consistently great experiences, and thinking about growth not just as acquiring new business – but as long-term value.

# Priorities vary significantly by firm size

When it comes to strategic focus, there's no one-size-fits-all approach. The size of your firm plays a major role in shaping your priorities and the picture across the profession is more nuanced than you might expect.

50%

Driving growth via new clients



For sole traders and smaller firms with 1–9 employees, growth is the clear priority. Half are prioritising converting new prospects above all else. With leaner teams and tighter resources, every new client counts, and finding ways to stand out and stay responsive is often the first step toward long-term stability.

36%

Attracting and retaining talent



As you move up the scale, priorities begin to diversify. Firms with 10–49 employees are split between tackling rising costs and investing in talent. These firms are often at a tipping point – big enough to feel growing pains, but still evolving their internal structure. The focus here is often on building a stronger foundation while maintaining momentum.

32%

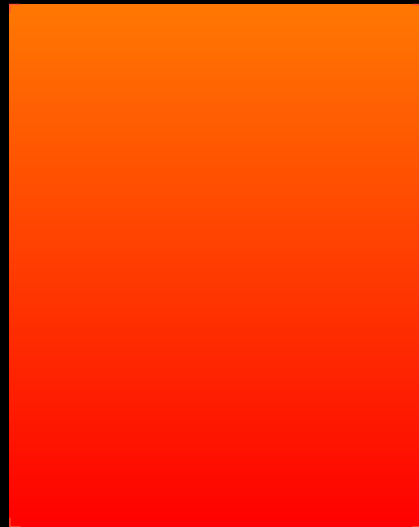
Growing revenue from existing clients



Mid-sized firms (50–99 employees) begin to shift focus toward client development. Increasing revenue from existing clients becomes a major priority, as these firms seek to improve margins, deepen relationships, and unlock more value from the clients they already serve.

40%

Driving growth via new clients



Finally, large firms with 250+ employees still prioritise winning new clients, but the strategy is more rounded. There's a stronger emphasis on staff recruitment and retention, and a recognition that client loyalty, team strength, and experience quality all go hand in hand.



When we founded Wilson Partners in 2008, our goal was simple but ambitious: to build a business of real substance. We set ourselves the target of reaching £1m of annual revenue by the time the London Olympics arrived in 2012, and we did it. At that stage, it was all about client acquisition — proving we had something to offer, winning new clients, and rolling up our sleeves to deliver everything ourselves. Growth meant survival, and survival meant getting clients through the door.

In many ways, those early years felt like Freshers’ Week at university — you’re just happy to meet and talk to anyone, eager to make connections and start building relationships. But just as in university life, you soon realise you can’t (and shouldn’t) be friends with everyone. Some clients are a perfect fit, others less so. That was the point where we began to rationalise, focusing on the clients we truly wanted to work with and building deeper relationships with those who shared our values, ambitions and appetite for growth.

As we passed our Olympic milestone and grew into a 10–15 person firm, the challenge evolved. Winning new work was no longer the hardest part — attracting and retaining the right people became the real priority. We realised that to scale at pace, we needed talented individuals who could deliver exceptional work, take ownership, and allow us drive the business forward.

This was the point where we consciously shifted from “quantity” to “quality” — choosing the right clients and investing heavily in building the team.

By the time we reached around 45 employees, with support from family office investment, we made a significant decision that underlined our philosophy: we hired our first Head of Employee Experience. That wasn’t common in accountancy firms at the time, especially at our size, but for us it was a clear signal of intent. We’ve always believed that if you create an exceptional environment for your team to thrive, outstanding client experiences will follow naturally. Culture became not just an enabler of growth, but the growth strategy itself.

Today, as a firm of more than 300 people, our strategic priorities are more balanced and more mature. We’re still very ambitious in terms of our new client acquisition, but it shouldn’t be forgotten that our existing client base is a goldmine.

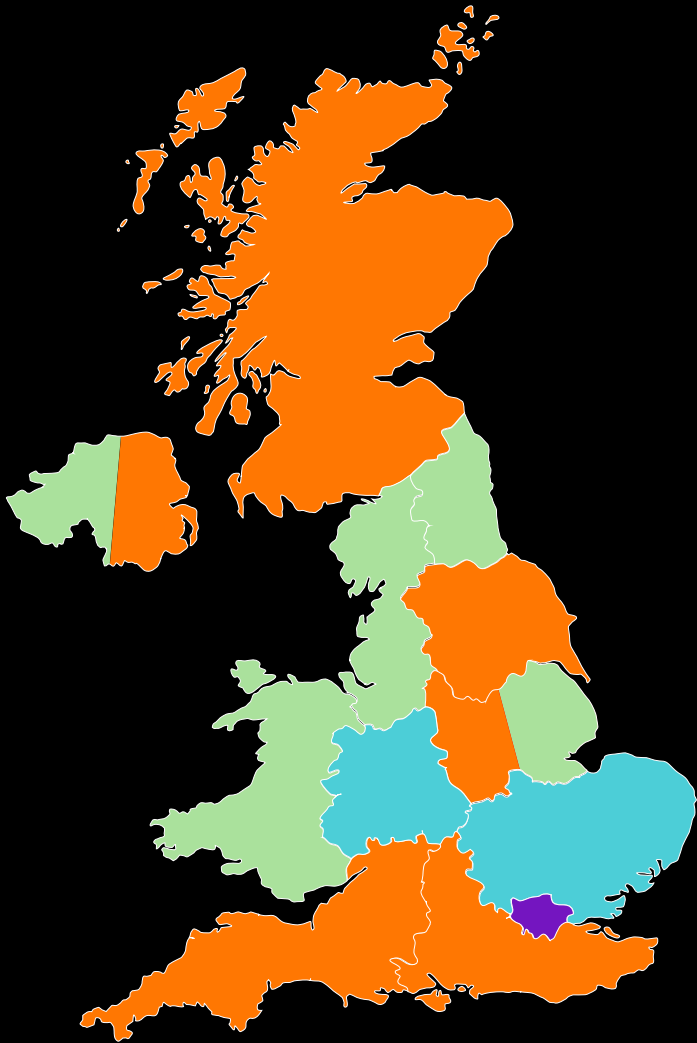
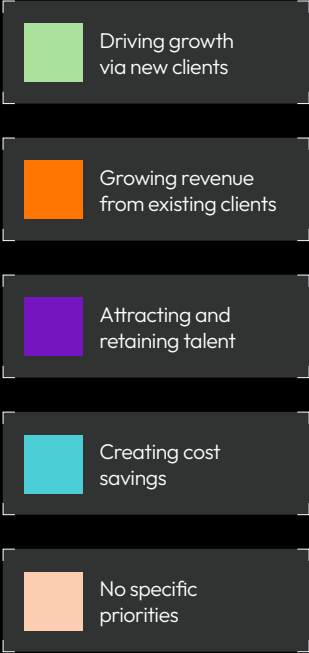
**If we truly understand our clients and serve them brilliantly, opportunities emerge that benefit everyone. Retention, attraction and loyalty — both of clients and our people — sit at the heart of sustainable growth.**

Talent remains critical. The war for skills in our profession is fierce, but we see this as an opportunity to differentiate. By being intentional about culture, development, and employee experience, we don’t just fill roles — we attract people who want to build a career with us. That’s attractive, not just to our people, but to clients as well. To ensure we continue to have the talent to support our growth we have invested heavily in expanding our talent pool to South Africa, where we opened an office 3 years ago and now have close to 40 people across all service lines. It’s a location like any one of our offices – it just happens to be a bit further away!

So, while the priorities have shifted with scale, the theme is consistent: invest in people and relationships, and both acquisition and retention take care of themselves. For us, loyalty is not a by-product of growth — it is the engine that powers it.



**Allan Wilson**  
Director – Wilson Partners



# Regional priorities across the UK

Location also plays a key role in shaping strategic focus. Firms in the North East and Wales are among the most growth-driven, with up to 50% prioritising winning new clients, highlighting a clear appetite for expansion in regions where competition and opportunity are evolving rapidly.

In contrast, firms in the East of England and West Midlands are more focused on creating cost savings. This likely reflects a need to navigate local economic pressures or manage internal capacity with greater efficiency.

Greater London firms continue to strike a more balanced approach, 43% are focused on attracting new clients, while 28% are concentrating on growing revenue from their existing base, showing strong commercial intent across both fronts.

Regional variations in strategic focus often reflect local market conditions, competition levels, and client demographics. So, what works in London may not land in Leeds.



Do firms have actionable client service plans?

## Client experience planning

Client experience has stepped out of the background and into the spotlight. Whether it's about keeping loyal clients, encouraging word-of-mouth referrals, or staying competitive in a fast-moving market, firms now understand that service delivery can't be left to chance.

These firms are actively identifying service gaps, setting meaningful goals, and putting the right people and processes in place to raise the bar across the entire client journey.

But there's still work to do. One in five firms admit they don't yet have a formal plan, an increasingly risky position when client expectations are rising, fast. In today's market, not planning for experience is planning to fall behind.

The good news? 81% of firms say they have a clear, actionable plan in place to improve client service in 2025. This shows that experience is no longer seen as a 'nice to have' - it's a core driver of performance, retention, and growth.

81%

- Yes, we have an actionable plan

19%

- No, we don't have a plan



# The cost of poor service

Despite growing awareness of its importance, many firms are still underestimating the true cost of poor client service. Only 39% have attempted to quantify how much revenue they may be losing due to service-related issues, leaving a majority (61%) effectively flying blind on one of their most significant commercial risks.

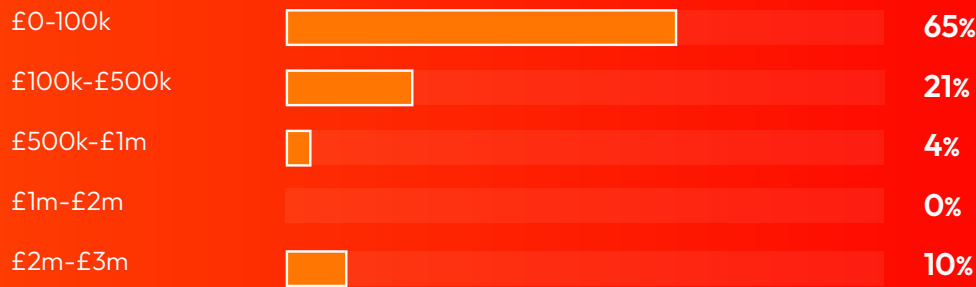
Among those who have done the maths, most estimate relatively modest losses. But for others, the figures are startling. In fact, 10% of firms report losses of between £2–3 million as a direct result of poor client experience.

It's a stark reminder that when service slips, so can revenue. Whether it's slow response times, inconsistent advice, or a lack of follow-up, small cracks in the experience can quickly turn into lost clients.

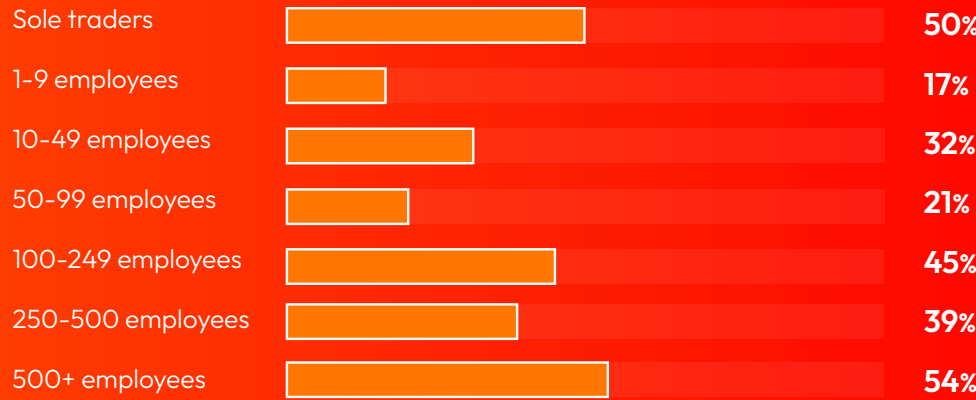
Larger firms are leading the way in tracking this impact. With more robust reporting and deeper resources, they're more likely to measure revenue leakage, and are also the ones uncovering the biggest losses. In contrast, mid-sized firms (50–99 employees) show a concerning measurement gap, potentially missing out on critical insight and the chance to close costly service gaps.

By contrast, sole traders and the largest firms (500+ employees) are much more likely to assess the commercial impact of service quality. It's the firms in the middle, busy, growing, and pulled in many directions, that are most at risk of letting experience issues quietly undermine their results.

## Estimated revenue loss by % of firms:



## Firm size of who measures revenue loss:



# Are firms listening enough?

Feedback is one of the most effective tools for improving client experience, but it’s still underutilised. Just over half of firms (52%) collect feedback regularly, while a further 39% do so often. Encouragingly, that means more than nine in ten firms are gathering some kind of insight from clients – but not necessarily in a structured or ongoing way.

## Feedback collection frequency



But collecting feedback is just the first step. The real value comes when it’s built into the rhythm of the firm. That means short, focused surveys after key interactions, informal check-ins, structured reviews, and most importantly, a culture that encourages acting on what’s learned. When firms embed feedback into everyday practice, it stops being a one-off exercise and starts becoming a driver of continuous improvement.

Even so, there are still gaps. 8% of firms said they rarely seek feedback, and 2% admitted they never do. For those aiming to drive growth through better service, this could be a missed opportunity to spot blind spots, surface unmet needs, and increase loyalty. Done well, feedback uncovers patterns, reveals what matters most to clients, and helps firms stay ahead of expectations. It also shows clients they’re being heard – building trust, loyalty, and advocacy over time.



## Monitor satisfaction scores over time, not just snapshots



# The biggest barriers to delivering great client experience

Every client journey has its friction points and firms are acutely aware of where those challenges lie. Our survey asked firms to identify their biggest pain points in delivering client experience, and the results reveal a mix of operational, communication, and cultural issues. These may be internal struggles, but when left unresolved they quickly surface in the client relationship – and can become the reason clients leave, or never sign up at all.

Top of the list is slow response to client enquiries, cited by 24% of firms. Whether it's a delayed reply to a new lead or a slow follow-up to an existing client, response speed sets the tone for trust. Your clients notice delays, and they don't always wait around.

Close behind are staff training gaps (22%), difficulties in keeping clients engaged long-term (21%), and onboarding challenges (21%). These are day-to-day delivery issues, things that happen, or don't happen, in the early moments and ongoing rhythm of the client relationship. And they're costing firms both revenue and reputation.

Other recurring pain points include message overload, inconsistent service quality, and poor internal communication. Each of these contributes to a fragmented client experience. Today's clients expect more than technical accuracy. They want clarity, speed, and a joined-up experience across every touchpoint. When those expectations aren't met, they don't always complain – they simply leave.

# How client journey challenges vary by region

While every firm is facing increasing pressure to deliver seamless service, the shape of that challenge often depends on where they're based. Across the UK, firms are feeling different kinds of friction along the client journey. Often driven by local expectations, operational maturity, and the speed at which their markets are evolving.

In some areas, basic delivery issues continue to cause frustration. Slow response times, inconsistent service, and onboarding delays are among the most frequently cited problems. These might sound like small cracks, but they're often the ones that cost firms the most, especially when clients start to question reliability.

Elsewhere, internal communication is the stumbling block. Where teams aren't aligned, it becomes harder to deliver a joined-up experience. This is particularly visible in regions with fast-growing firms, where processes haven't always scaled alongside demand.

Tech infrastructure is also playing a bigger role than ever. In some parts of the UK, firms are still limited by outdated systems, making it harder to stay responsive or personalise communication at pace.

Interestingly, in highly competitive markets like London, the challenge is less about delivery and more about retention. Clients have more choice, and less patience, so even minor lapses in communication or consistency can result in a lost relationship.

There's no single fix, because no two firms, or client bases, are the same. But what's clear is that experience pain points are everywhere. The firms that are addressing them early and often are the ones turning everyday service into a meaningful, lasting advantage.

- Slow responses to client enquiries
- Inconsistent service quality
- Staff need more training on service
- Staff changes affect client relationships
- Don't collect or use client feedback
- Poor communication between teams
- Trouble keeping clients long-term
- Onboarding new clients is difficult





Client expectations have shifted dramatically in recent years, especially with the rise of digital systems and instant communication.

One thing that has really helped us is being part of an international network. This gives us regular touchpoints with the UK firms in the network across the country, so we can benchmark, share insights and better understand how regional differences play out. This has proved pivotal in helping us adapt our own client service to stay ahead of evolving expectations.

**Our clients are seeing several challenges right now. Rising costs and tighter regulations are making it harder to stay ahead. Some have seen slower sales or late payments affecting cash flow. There is still a sense of uncertainty with global and policy shifts making planning more difficult.**

Despite all this, we have seen businesses are adapting through innovation, collaboration, and finding new ways to move forward and grow.

We invest in training our team to communicate effectively with clients, whether over the phone or in person, so we can quickly identify solutions and deliver real value. This personal touch has helped us build stronger relationships and gain deeper insight into our clients’ needs.

As competition increases, retaining both clients and staff has become more challenging. We have responded by focusing on key areas such as becoming an employer of choice locally, having a targeted marketing and sales strategy, building on our CRM system, streamlining onboarding and creating clear client touchpoints.

Our client journey is not just about solving problems, it is about anticipating them, working closely with our clients and delivering a responsive, forward-thinking service. In a region where expectations are high, that means constantly refining how we listen, respond and deliver to our clients.



**Liz Horton**  
Joint Managing Director -  
Seymour Taylor  
Accountants and Tax Advisors



# The power of the first response

The first interaction a client has with your firm often sets the tone for everything that follows. It's your first chance to show that you're responsive, reliable, and ready to help, before a single piece of advice is given or any work is done.

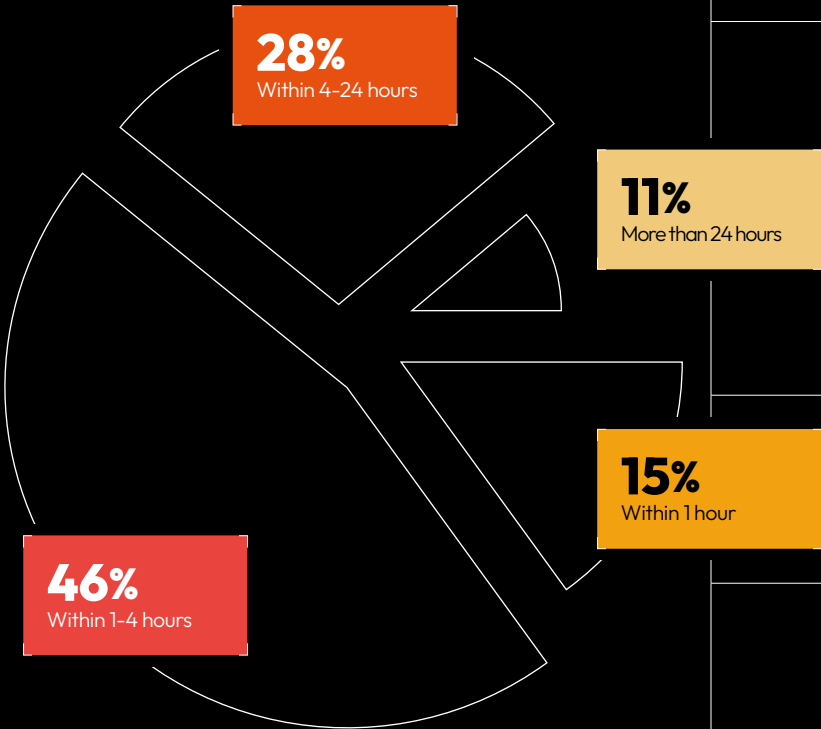
In a market where expectations are rising fast, speed matters. So does professionalism. Clients now expect clear, confident communication from the outset and when that's missing, trust can be hard to build later.

Our research shows that just 15% of firms respond to new client enquiries within the first hour. The majority 46%, get back within one to four hours, while 28% take up to a full day. A small but significant 11% either take longer than 24 hours or don't know how long it typically takes them to respond at all.

The risk here isn't just losing a lead, but it's leaving the wrong first impression. Every hour that passes increases the likelihood that the client has gone elsewhere or formed an opinion that's hard to undo.

It's not only about speed either, it's also about who responds, and how well-equipped they are to handle that first interaction. The firms getting this right are treating the first response not as admin, but as a crucial part of the client experience.

## How quickly firms respond to new enquiries





# Who responds the quickest?

Unsurprisingly, sole traders are the fastest responders, with 100% saying they get back to enquiries within an hour. Their lean structure means fewer handoffs and more direct access.

Smaller firms with up to 49 employees typically reply within 1–4 hours, striking a good balance between agility and capacity. Medium-sized firms (50–249 employees) start to feel the strain, with average response times stretching to 4–8 hours. At the very top end, large firms with 250+ employees often take between 4–24 hours, as more complex processes and multiple handoffs introduce delays

## How quickly firms respond to new enquiries



The challenge is clear: as firms grow, speed becomes harder to maintain, but no less important.



# The real cost of delays

Every minute you leave a lead waiting, you risk losing them. Research consistently shows that speed directly affects conversion.

One widely cited study by Capital Leads found that leads contacted within five minutes are 100× more likely to convert than those contacted after 30 minutes. Chili Piper also reported that the odds of qualifying a lead drop by 21× if the response time stretches from five minutes to half an hour.

Vendasta uncovered that 78% of clients end up choosing the first company that replies, reinforcing the idea that first impressions don't just matter, they often decide the outcome.

Delayed responses don't just cost you leads; they signal lower urgency and care. In contrast, firms that prioritise quick, well-trained responses create early trust and dramatically improve their chances of converting.

78% of clients end up choosing the first company that replies



**First impressions count more than most firms realise. That first conversation sets the tone, and inconsistent handling can make firms look unprofessional or unclear on what they offer.**

Too often, enquiries are left to chance — sometimes picked up by a partner, other times by admin, or even an automated system. The result is an inconsistent experience that risks confusing clients or, worse, making them feel undervalued. By contrast, firms that treat the first enquiry as the beginning of a relationship show they are organised, attentive, and ready to help.

With Moneypenny handling new enquiries, firms are guaranteed a consistently professional first impression. Every call is answered quickly, by a dedicated receptionist who knows how to put the caller at ease and capture the right details. This means no opportunities are lost, and prospects immediately feel that they’re in safe, capable hands. We make sure every first impression reflects the firm’s professionalism. Calls are answered promptly, messages are relayed accurately, and clients are directed to the right person at the right time.

This combination of speed and consistency creates a seamless experience for the enquirer and gives firms confidence that their reputation is being protected.

Handled well, that very first conversation is the moment where trust begins to form — and trust is what wins and keeps clients.

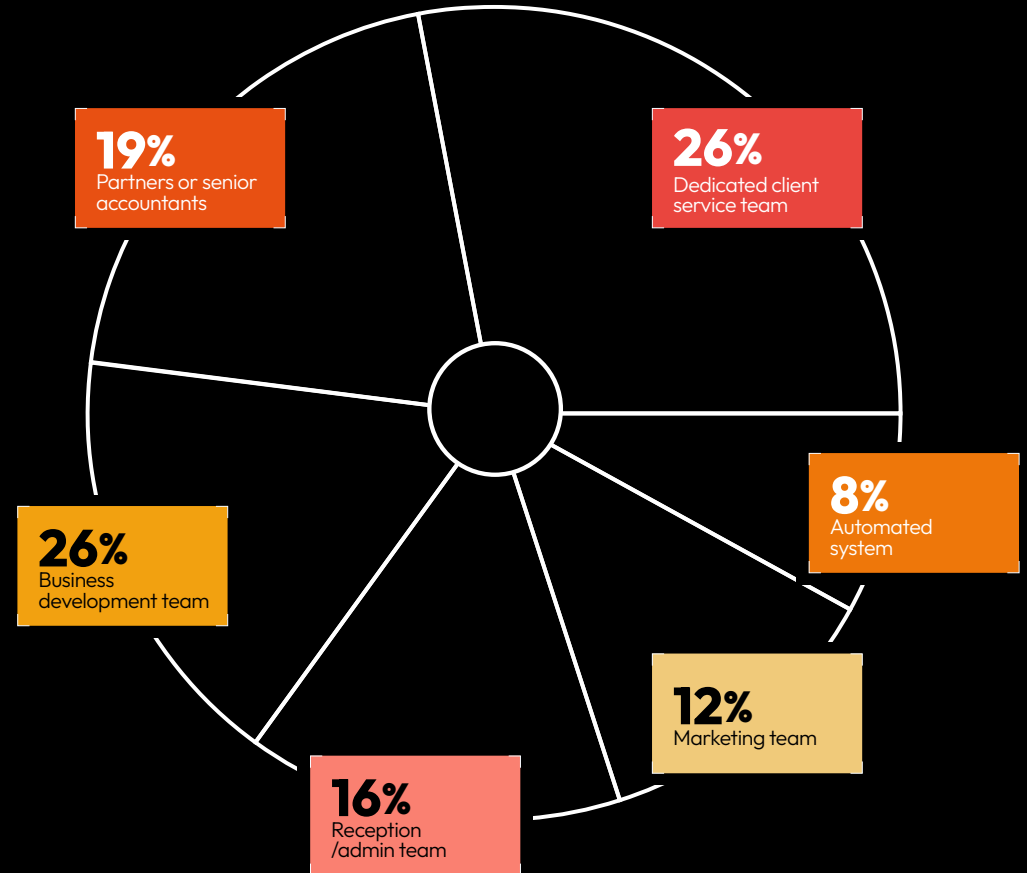


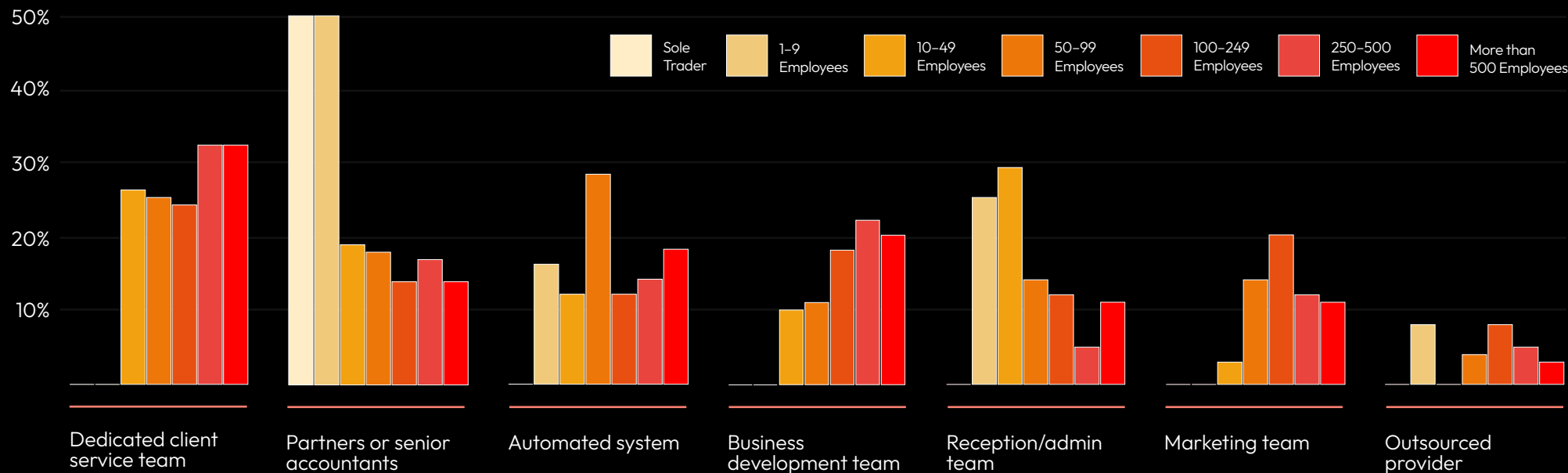
**Louise Walpole**  
Head of Finance Sector  
Moneypenny

# The human behind the hello

Speed is important, but so is who your potential client speaks to first. That first point of contact can shape the client's perception of your professionalism, service quality, and culture.

Having a dedicated client service team, as 26% of firms do, ensures consistency and professionalism. But many firms still rely on whoever's available, risking inconsistent experiences.





# How firm size influences the first interaction

Firm size plays a major role in shaping how enquiries are handled. Sole traders and small firms (1-9 employees) most often rely on partners or senior staff, reflecting a hands-on but informal approach. These firms rarely have a structured system in place, which can lead to inconsistencies in how potential clients are greeted and qualified.

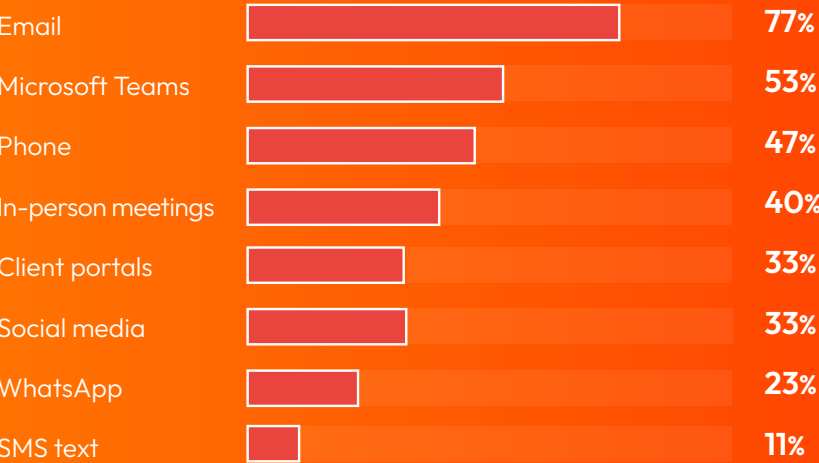
As firms grow, a shift toward dedicated teams becomes clear. Mid-sized firms (10-249 employees) begin to distribute enquiry handling across client service, admin, and business development roles. In the largest firms (250+ employees), dedicated client service and BD teams become the norm, supported by marketing and automation tools. This evolution shows how growth enables firms to professionalise the client journey from the very first touchpoint.



# Introducing the rise of multichannel communication

Clients nowadays expect to reach their accountant in the same way they reach everyone else – quickly, easily, and on their terms. That means firms are no longer judged just by what they say, but how, and where they say it.

Communication channels in use:



Most firms have adapted well. Email remains the dominant channel, used by 77% of firms, followed by phone (47%) and in-person meetings (40%). But there's a clear shift happening. Over half of firms (53%) now use Microsoft Teams and other video platforms to manage client conversations, showing how these tools have evolved from internal collaboration to client-facing communication.

WhatsApp, used by almost a quarter of firms (23%), is another emerging channel. While it offers speed and familiarity for clients, many firms admit they're uneasy about its use. Concerns centre on data security, the lack of visibility over conversations, and the risk of important exchanges being tied to individual employees' phones. For this reason, many firms are actively encouraging clients and staff to move discussions into Teams, where conversations are visible, secure, and easier to manage centrally.

For clients, this growing flexibility is a win. It means they can ask a quick question, share a document, or confirm a deadline without waiting for a formal reply. For firms, however, it also brings new demands. With more channels come more complexity: messages arrive in different formats, at all hours, and from multiple people. Tone can slip, context gets lost, and without clear systems, conversations can easily become fragmented.

The firms getting it right are putting structure behind this flexibility. They're setting clear boundaries, using technology to track touchpoints, and making sure the experience stays coherent, no matter where the conversation starts.



# The biggest communication challenges firms face

While firms have embraced a multichannel approach, many are now dealing with the operational strain that comes with it. The most common challenge is managing message volume, cited by 19% of firms. This is closely followed by delays in response times (18%), then maintaining tone across platforms (14%) and lack of personalisation (13%).

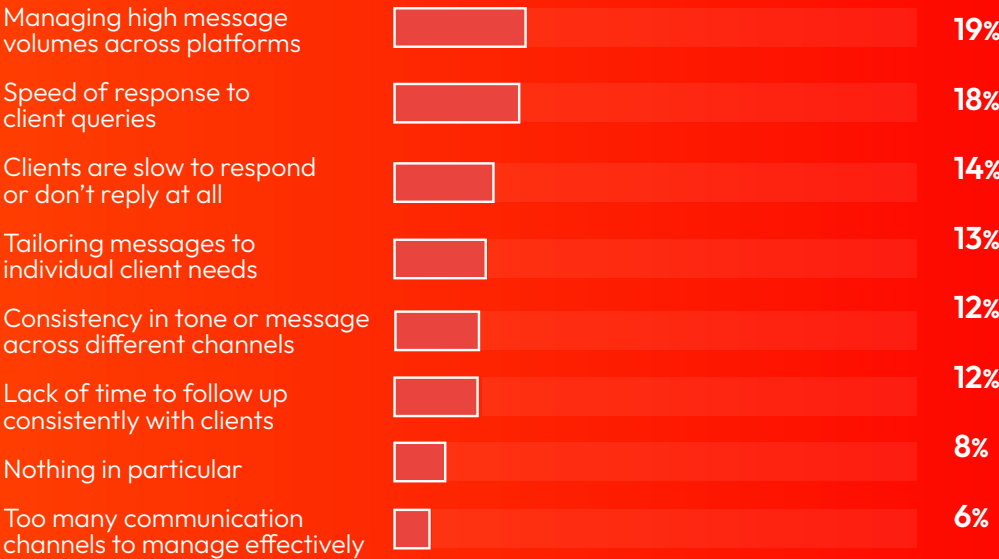
The pressure points shift depending on firm size. Larger firms, particularly those with 100+ employees, report issues with internal coordination. With multiple team members involved in client communication, ensuring consistency and avoiding duplication becomes harder to control. Without a clear handover or shared context, even simple interactions risk feeling disjointed.

In contrast, smaller firms and sole traders are more likely to feel the weight of expectations across too many formats. For them, switching between channels

and keeping up with the pace of messages becomes a day-to-day drain, often without the support of dedicated admin or tech tools.

What starts as accessibility can quickly become inefficiency. And unless systems are in place to track, route, and manage client conversations, multichannel communication risks becoming more reactive than responsive, impacting both the client experience and team wellbeing.

## Key communication challenges by firm size:



# How Teams is transforming client collaboration

Microsoft Teams has quietly become one of the most important tools in a firm’s communication toolkit. What started as an internal collaboration platform is now being used by more and more firms to manage client conversations.

Our survey shows that 53% of all firms now use Teams for client interactions. For firms, Teams offers a single environment to host calls, share files, and follow up seamlessly, all without switching between platforms.

As client expectations shift toward fast but consistent communication, platforms like Teams are helping firms strike the right balance, blending responsiveness with structure, and flexibility with control.

53% of all firms now use Teams for client interactions

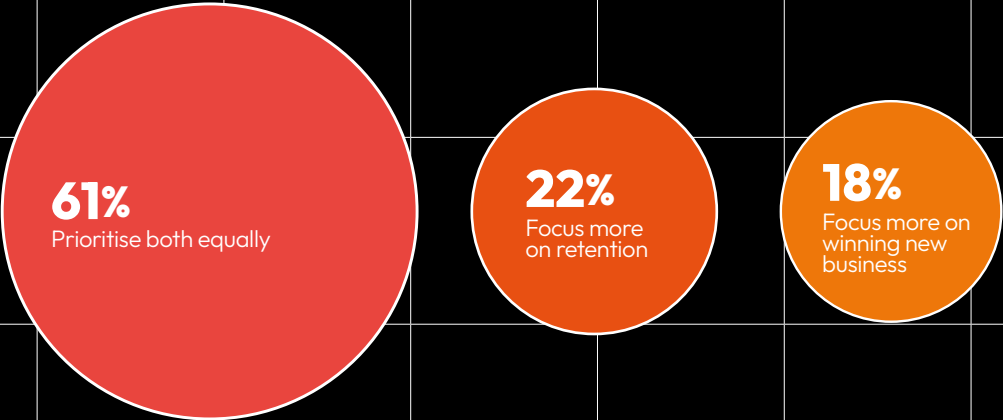
## How we help our clients get the most from Teams

“With Microsoft Teams integrations, our accountancy clients are saving valuable time and ensuring calls reach the right person at the right moment. Our receptionists can instantly see a client’s availability avoiding unnecessary interruptions and ensuring important calls aren’t missed. By reading internal out-of-office messages too, we can route calls more intelligently, directing them to the right contact so those valuable leads connect with a team member who can help straight away.”

Amy Dawson  
Head of Client Success  
Moneypenny



How firms balance securing new business and retention:



Growth is great,  
but keeping clients is smarter

Balancing new business with client loyalty

It's one of the biggest strategic questions in any accountancy firm: should we focus on winning new business, or keeping the clients we already have?

The answer for most? **Both.**

The majority of firms recognise that sustainable growth depends on not just filling the pipeline, but keeping it flowing. However, priorities still vary.

Nearly a quarter lean more heavily toward retention, while 18% focus mainly on bringing in new clients.

This tells us that while retention is increasingly recognised as a revenue strategy, driving growth via new business still holds the spotlight, especially for firms looking to grow quickly or recover from previous churn.

# Implementing retention strategies that work

Retention doesn't happen by accident. The most successful firms are intentional about building loyalty, using structured strategies to stay visible, valuable, and proactive.

These efforts show that firms are investing in long-term trust, not just transaction-based relationships. And for many, these strategies are the difference between a 2-year and a 10-year client.

**72%**

## Regular check-ins

# 64%

## Client satisfaction surveys

# 63%

## Value-add services

# 49%

### Educational content/events





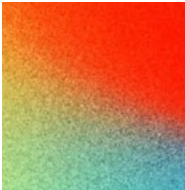
Over the past year, we have witnessed growing complexity and challenge across every stage of the client journey, whether with our rural or commercial clients. Uncertainty surrounding proposed and implemented Government Budget announcement changes have made it hard for clients to plan effectively, balancing any short-term impact with their longer-term plans. With several developments taking effect at once, clients have sought clarity and reassurance at a time when the scale of change, combined with uncertainty around ongoing government outcomes, made it more difficult to provide clear and timely guidance.

In terms of service delivery, the rapid pace of technological advancement and increased cybersecurity demands have affected client onboarding and communications. Additional checks and rapid adjustments to internal procedures have sometimes caused delays, highlighting the need for agile internal communication and ongoing staff training.

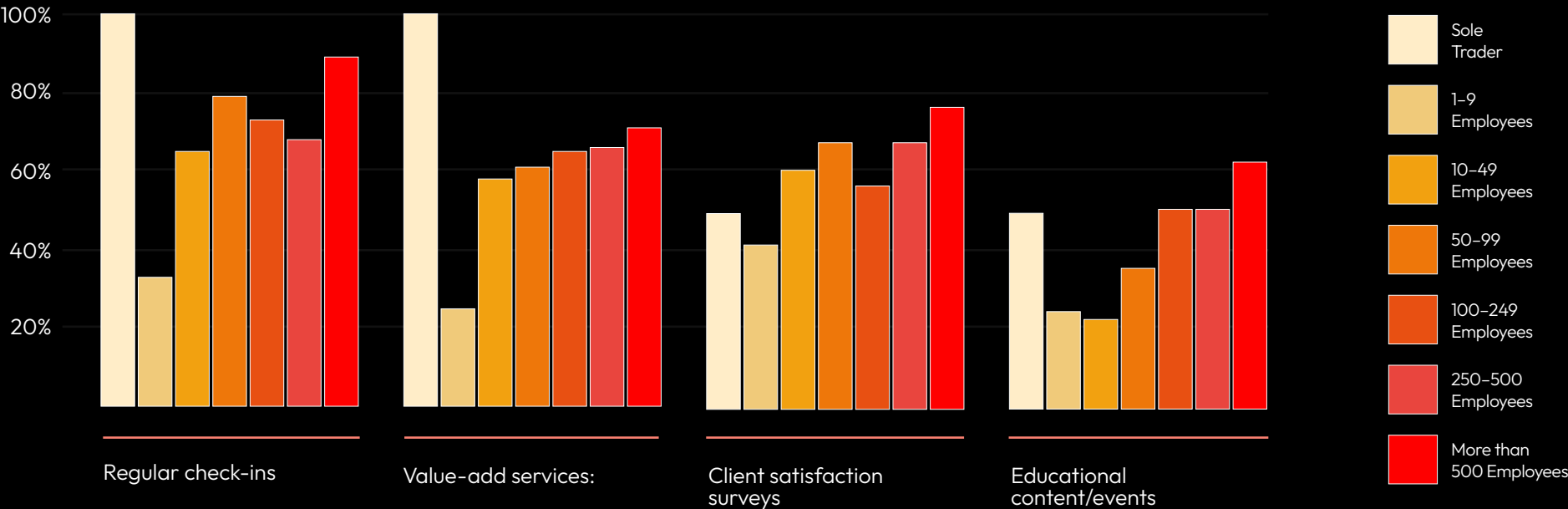
Based on client feedback, and with a continued focus on improvement, we are actively seeking client reviews. This reflects just how much importance we place on learning directly from our clients about where we can do better. As a result, we have introduced a number of enhancements to the client experience. Direct dial contact details now appear on all email footers to improve accessibility, and we have launched a firmwide client experience training programme. While our team brings strong technical expertise, this initiative focuses on developing personal skills and fostering a more client-centred mindset. We are already seeing a noticeable improvement in communication and service across key touchpoints.



**Jenny Head**  
Business Development  
Manager at WR Partners



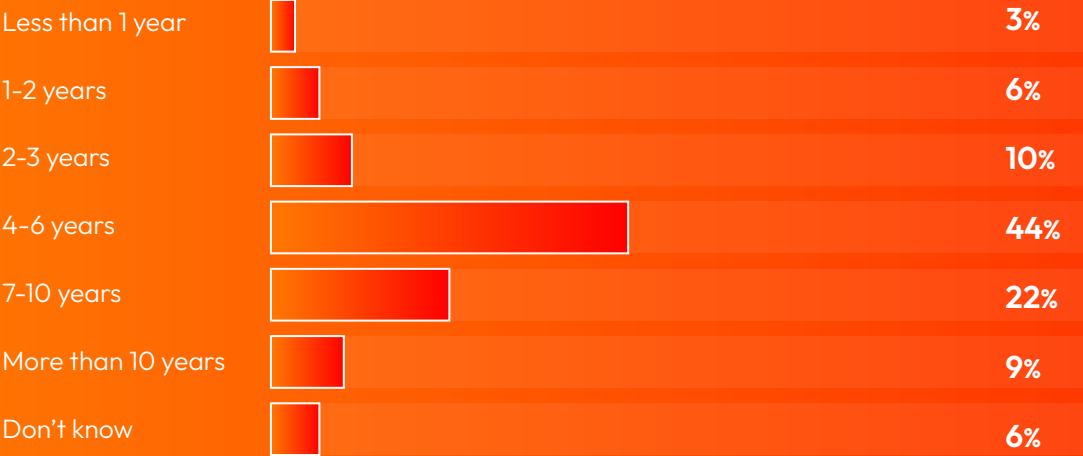




# How retention strategies vary by firm size

The way firms approach retention is closely tied to their size and capacity. Sole traders often excel at personal touch but tend to lack formal systems for gathering feedback or tracking trends. In small firms (1-9 employees), basic retention activities like surveys or check-ins are used less consistently, highlighting a clear opportunity for improvement.

Mid-sized firms show a more structured approach, layering in a mix of check-ins, value-add services, and educational content. Meanwhile, large firms lead the way. Nearly 90% conduct regular check-ins, and the majority use all core strategies at scale. With more dedicated resource, these firms are embedding retention into day-to-day operations - treating loyalty not as a by-product, but as a deliberate growth lever.



These figures highlight the strong lifetime value of a satisfied client. Every extra year a client stays improves:

- Revenue consistency
- Cross-sell/upsell opportunities
- Referrals and reviews
- Efficiency of service delivery

Interestingly, the largest firms (500+) show higher early churn than mid-sized firms, suggesting that scale can sometimes work against relationship longevity. The sweet spot appears to be firms with 250-500 employees, who achieve the best balance of professional service and personal attention.

# The lifetime value of loyalty

When a client signs on with a firm, how long do they stay? For most, it's not a short-term decision. Our survey shows that 44% of firms say their typical client relationship lasts 4-6 years, while nearly a third (31%) report relationships lasting 7 years or more.



A client who stays 5 years instead of 2 doesn't just represent 150% more revenue - they're also more likely to refer others, require less handholding, and purchase additional services. The true value multiplies over time.





# Understanding and preventing client churn

No firm is immune to losing clients. But understanding why they leave is essential to reducing churn and strengthening loyalty.

While some factors like changing client needs may be outside a firm’s control, many departure reasons are preventable. Lack of proactive communication, poor responsiveness, and service quality issues are all within a firm’s power to address.

## The main reasons clients choose to leave:



# Prevention strategies by reason

↘				↘						
	<b>For pricing concerns:</b> Demonstrate value regularly, not just at renewal				<b>For communication gaps:</b> Implement quarterly check-ins as standard					
		↘				↘				
			<b>For responsiveness:</b> Set and meet clear SLAs for all client queries				<b>For relationship risks:</b> Ensure multiple touchpoints within each client			



## How firms are using AI to enhance client experience

Once a distant concept, AI is now becoming a practical part of how accountancy firms deliver faster, more personalised service. It's not about replacing people - it's about helping teams respond faster, follow up smarter, and manage growing client expectations more efficiently.

Our research shows that 52% of firms are already using AI tools to enhance the client experience, with applications ranging from simple automation to predictive insights. But nearly half of firms (48%) aren't using AI at all – showing just how much untapped potential there still is to make client service quicker, easier, and more consistent.

## Automated reminders and follow-ups



## Analysing client feedback



## Answering common client queries



## Personalising client communications



## Onboarding new clients



## Predicting client needs/risks

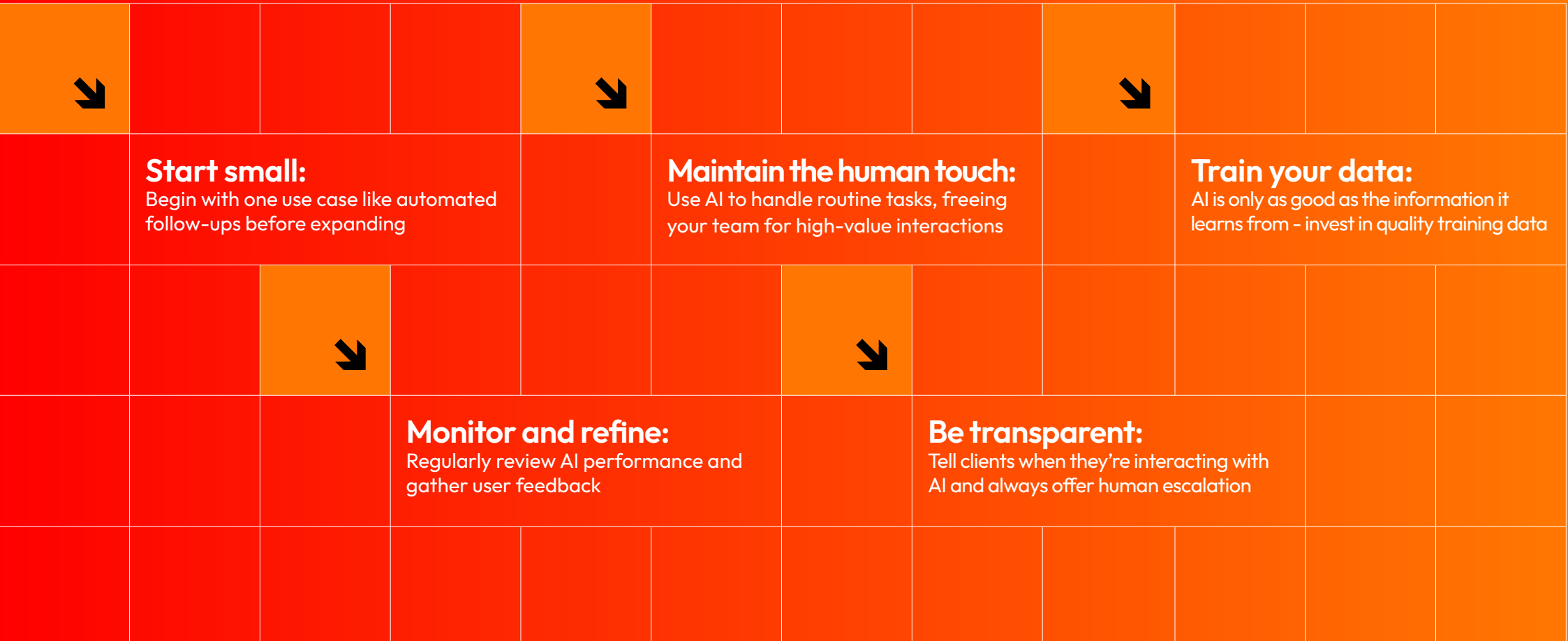


## Improve the physical office environment



## Not using AI for client experience







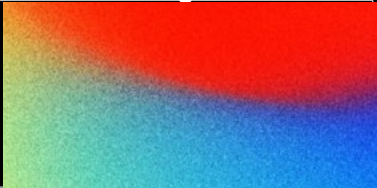


AI is coming at every profession fast, and accounting is no exception. What smart firms must do is ensure they emphasise the human element of what they do, so that AI doesn't diminish value in the eyes of clients.

Firms should position themselves between AI and the client, and instead of focusing on cost-savings that might arise from using AI, articulate the value that can be added. For example, in using AI to speed up workflow, emphasise how that allows the accountant to spend more time with the client adding value; interpreting the data produced and looking forward rather than simply interpreting what's already happened. An excellent first step in implementing AI in your firm is to improve the employee experience, not necessarily the client experience. For when employees experience the impact of AI, it breeds confidence and belief in the team that they and clients will benefit.



Douglas Aitken  
Director  
Remarkable Practice



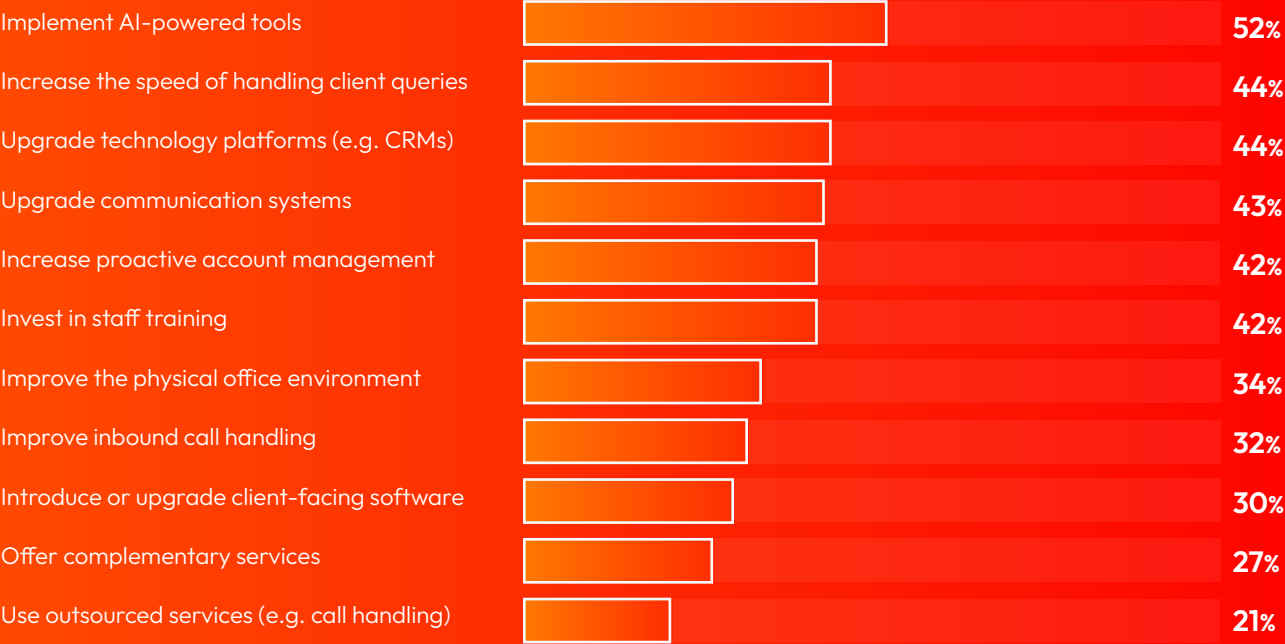
# Where firms are spending to improve client experience

Improving client experience isn't just about intention, it takes investment. The good news? Most firms are actively putting money behind service improvement, and they're spreading that spend across technology, people, and process.

52% of firms are investing in AI-powered tools

According to our survey, over half of firms are investing in AI-powered tools, while 44% are upgrading communication systems, and 42% are focused on staff training. This shows a balanced approach: firms recognise that great client experience isn't just about better tools - it's about how teams use them.

Interestingly, 34% are also investing in environmental improvements, like better office layouts or hybrid working setups that help teams collaborate more efficiently.





# What's driving spend – and what's holding it back

The drive to invest is largely client-led. Firms report that rising expectations around response times, communication ease, and personalisation are pushing them to upgrade both their systems and their approach.

At the same time, internal drivers, like talent retention and efficiency, are making investment in training and tech more urgent. In a tight labour market, equipping teams with better tools and processes is seen not just as an efficiency move, but as a recruitment and retention strategy too.

However, not all firms are moving at the same pace. Smaller firms often cite budget limitations or uncertainty around ROI as reasons for slower adoption – though many acknowledge the need to catch up soon.



### **Respond faster and smarter**

It's not just about quick responses – it's about meaningful ones. Many firms are now turning to outsourcing to guarantee 24/7 responsiveness, ensuring every enquiry is captured. Combined with smart systems to triage and track enquiries in real time, this means the right person responds with the right information, every time.



### **Follow up with intent**

Don't let silence be the last step. Proactive follow-ups after meetings, deliverables, and even casual conversations build trust and uncover opportunities. Make follow-up a systematic practice, not an afterthought.



### **Make feedback a habit, not a form**

Stop treating feedback as an annual exercise. Build continuous listening into every client interaction. Use quick pulse surveys, informal check-ins, and regular reviews to stay aligned with client needs.



### **Invest in the right mix of tech and training**

Technology alone isn't enough. Your team needs the skills, confidence, and authority to deliver exceptional service. Balance your tech investments with equal focus on people development.



### **Treat retention as a revenue engine**

Your existing clients are your biggest growth opportunity. They're easier to serve, more profitable, and more likely to refer. Design your service around keeping clients for decades, not years.

# Five principles for client experience



# The future belongs to client-centric firms

The message from this our research is clear: **client experience has moved from nice to have to business-critical. Firms that excel at service are winning more clients, keeping them longer, and generating superior returns.**

But perhaps more importantly, they're building firms that are more enjoyable to run. When client service works well, everything else follows - from team satisfaction to business growth.

The firms seeing greatest success share common traits:

- They measure what matters
- They invest in people and technology equally
- They treat every interaction as an opportunity
- They never stop improving

As we look ahead to the rest of 2025 and beyond, the question isn't whether to prioritise client experience - it's how quickly you can transform yours.

The opportunity is there. The tools are available. The only thing missing is action.

Will your firm be among the leaders, or will you watch competitors pull ahead?

**The choice - and the moment - is yours.**



# Supporting accountancy firms at every stage of growth

Hundreds of accountancy professionals, including half of the Top 100, rely on Moneypenny's call and live chat solutions to enhance their client experience and ensure every enquiry is captured cost-effectively.

## Our solutions include:

**Telephone Answering:** Your Moneypenny Receptionists answer all calls or just when you're busy – you choose. Briefed by you, they can transfer calls, take messages, book appointments, and more.

**Live Chat:** Our 24/7 managed solution combines amazing tech and agents, and is completely flexible. We'll capture people browsing your website and secure more leads for you.

**Outsourced Switchboard:** For larger firms, we provide complete switchboard outsourcing, handling high call volumes with exceptional efficiency and professionalism.

**Microsoft Teams Integration:** Seamlessly connect our services with your Teams environment, ensuring smooth communication flows and complete visibility of all client interactions.

**Lead Management:** Your Moneypenny Receptionists will book appointments, take payments and qualify leads on your behalf, and drop everything neatly into your CRM system so no enquiry slips through the cracks.

**AI Voice Agent:** Delivering a conversational experience that feels like speaking to a real person, our call handling solution is available as a fully AI-driven service or integrated with our real receptionists.

**Want to find out how Moneypenny  
could support your firm?**

**Get in touch with our team, we'd  
love to show you what's possible.**



## Why accountancy firms choose Moneypenny:

### Brilliant people

UK-based, highly trained  
professionals

### Leading technology

AI-enhanced routing and  
real-time reporting

### Sector expertise

Deep understanding of  
accountancy needs

### Scalable service

From overflow support  
to 24/7 coverage



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