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that clients look for when choosing an accounting firm? These are some of the key questions analyzed in the 2016 Wolters Kluwer Tax & Accounting survey and white ...

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What are the key components to client satisfaction? And what are the key attributes that clients look for when choosing an accounting firm? These are some of the key

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priority [in previous Wolters Kluwer white papers](#).

“This year’s survey provides a stark reality in that, at any given time, nearly one third of a firm’s clients could walk out the door. This indicates a critical need for firms to analyze how they are doing business today and where they need to improve to meet clients’ expectations,” said Marx.

The survey finds that firms with satisfied customers expect an average 7% improvement in revenue over the next year while firms with dissatisfied clients actually predict their revenue to decrease by 11% over that time frame. The firms that have invested in an integrated end-to-end solution see a significant impact, with higher satisfaction ratings (81%) versus those firms that do not use an integrated end-to-end solution (66%).

Based on the survey findings, the white paper reveals a game plan of strategic priorities that firms can employ to help ensure client satisfaction and potentially reduce the risk of client turnover. These priorities include:

- 1. Execute the basics well**

According to the survey, the top criteria clients cite for choosing a firm is technical expertise, or an in-depth knowledge of tax law and accounting regulations. In fact, 44% of clients report that staying abreast of the ever-changing regulatory landscape is one of the top factors that will most impact their relationship with their accounting firms, while only 22% of accounting firms say the same. Focusing on the key basics that clients are looking for can help firms stay ahead and proactively demonstrate how they can better meet the needs of their clients.

- 2. Use technology to support client service**

In another key survey finding, timeliness and quality of services top the list of

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computers (cited by both firms and clients as the number one answer)

- Software architecture that allows the integration of various firm functions
- Time-saving solutions that increase firm efficiency
- Mobile technology such as tablets and smartphones

“In today’s competitive landscape, both the assurance work and the corporate tax work processes need to be highly automated and streamlined to allow all modern firms to efficiently and effectively complete the compliance aspects of their jobs, while leaving their staff adequate time to focus on driving value,” said Garrett Wagner, CPA, CITP and Business Therapist at Thaney & Associates CPAs PC.

Added Wesley Middleton, CPA and Managing Partner at MiddletonRaines+Zapata, LLP: “I believe that the more we can utilize and leverage technology, the better we are going to be able to serve our clients. It doesn’t matter if you’re a one-man shop, or have 10 or 15 people, or you’re our size or larger. You can have a high-tech environment and have that remote access that people want and expect.”

3. Improve communication and meet with clients more frequently

When asked about factors driving them to seek another accounting firm, 35% of clients cite poor communications as a key factor. The survey shows that when clients find it difficult to get answers from their firms, they may leave and find their answers at another firm. Notably, 75% of satisfied clients expect their firm to respond within 24 hours.

4. Add higher-value services

Clients that use a wider variety of services from their tax and accounting firms are more likely to report themselves as satisfied. Seventy-six percent of those clients using four or more services reported being satisfied, in comparison to only 50% for

those using fewer than four services. At the same time, clients that use four or more

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