



“ The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place. ”

- George Bernard Shaw

**WHAT GETS FORGOTTEN WHEN LAW FIRMS MERGE? FURTHER INSIGHTS.**

**Anne Harnetty Jonson Beaumont Core.**

We are working on a research study on what works and what does not in merger integration and are giving initial insights into some of our early research. Thank you to everyone who has already generously given their time for the study.

One area that stood out in our research was that important client communication issues were not addressed in the same way or given the same priority as operational issues. Everyone agreed that excellent client care will help you grow your firm's business and reputation but there was little real planning. One firm in our research said:

**“We didn't have a plan on how we informed clients we left it to individuals, that was an error as there was no strength or depth to the message.”**

We were given numerous examples of this message.

Putting clients first is a priority for most firms and is essential for future success. If you say that your clients are at the very heart of your firm, why would you not keep them informed of changes that will benefit them?

Have you thought what message will you send to clients to ensure that you secure their long-term loyalty after the merger?

There is a significant difference between informing and communicating with clients. Sending an email is not communicating, though it might be the starting point of the message you want to deliver.

Giving information is, of course necessary and important but it is a statement. Communicating is about asking questions, listening to answers, receiving information, analysing responses, reassessing your position, and moving the discussion forward. In very few cases was this considered.

It should be an obvious point, communicate with clients well and provide an excellent client experience, and your firm will stand out, that should be a priority with a merger.

Sadly, several reports indicate that whilst lawyers believe they are good communicators, clients do not always concur, and our research indicates that many law firms do not communicate with clients in the way the client expects pre or post mergers and acquisitions.

Clients want genuine ownership of the relationship by the partner and the team. When firms get bigger, people may think it's just an institutional relationship, but clients still really want personal care and you must show them that it will continue after the merger.

Reputation management cannot be underestimated in a merger. Everything a business says and does has the power to reflect on its brand in a positive or negative way and well managed communication is key to ensure the message is positive.

If you are a professional service firm that has merged and would like to help our research study, please contact me.

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