How does your firm compare?

Built & Natural Environment Benchmarking Report 2021

→ Improve your client service and value-for-money
→ Find alternatives to being tempted and pressured into lowering price
→ Encourage your clients to spread positive word-of-mouth about you

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Purpose of this report

This report has been produced using data from the Client Choice Awards for Built & Natural Environment firms with an annual turnover of less than $30M. Firms taking part in this category have already received their own individual feedback reports to which they can compare with the results presented in this report.

The scores are absolute, i.e. they show the actual average out of the maximum of 10. As to be expected – and as **beaton** finds in all our surveys of how clients perceive professional services firms – the scores are high. Afterall, 9 or 8 or even 7 out of 10 for a university assignment is pretty good, isn't it? Yes it is, but is good enough when you are competing intensely to retain and grow your current clients and attract new ones?

It's your relative performance – how you compare – that really matters. Put another way, where does your firm fall against the best performing firms in your profession?

This report on benchmarks for your and related professions is designed to:

- ✓ Help your firm improve your service and value-for-money for your clients
- ✓ Find alternatives to being tempted and pressured into price-down tactics in a race to the bottom
- ✓ Encourage your clients to spread positive word-of-mouth about you – the best form of marketing – and it's free!

How and when this data was gathered

This report has been produced using the data collected as part of the 'Built & Natural Environment Consulting (less than $30m revenue)' category of the Client Choice Awards since 2019. The scores presented in this report are based on the feedback of over 4,800 users of built & natural environment consulting professional services across Australia and New Zealand.

Client Choice Awards 2021 saw 45 firms enter across the fields of acoustical consulting, architecture, consulting engineering, consulting surveying (*new this year*), environmental consulting, heritage consulting, planning (*new this year*), project management, quantity surveying and traffic & transport consulting. Over 1,400 completed responses were collected in this year's survey.

Each firm entering the Client Choice Awards was provided with a unique link to **beaton**'s survey which they then distributed to their own clients. Data collection ran from July 2020 through to February 2021.

As part of the entry process, all firms taking part in the Client Choice Awards received a report of the feedback collected from their own clients. The data from these reports was then aggregated and de-identified to produce the figures provided in this report.

beaton warmly thanks the following professional associations for supporting our research by promoting the Client Choice Awards to their members:

Client Choice Awards 2021 Winners

Congratulations to the winners in each of this year's awards categories.

Best Acoustical Consulting Firm
(<$30m revenue)

Resonate Consultants

Best Architecture Firm
(<$30m revenue)

ArtMade Architects

Best Consulting Engineering Firm
(<$30m revenue)

AT&L Associates

Best Consulting Surveying Firm
(<$30m revenue)

Lawson Surveys

Best Environmental Firm
(<$30m revenue)

4Pillars Environmental Consulting

Best Heritage Consulting Firm
(<$30m revenue)

GML Heritage Group

Best Planning Firm
(<$30m revenue)

SGS Economics and Planning

Best Project Management Firm
(<$30m revenue)

Planix Projects

Best Quantity Surveying Firm
(<$30m revenue)

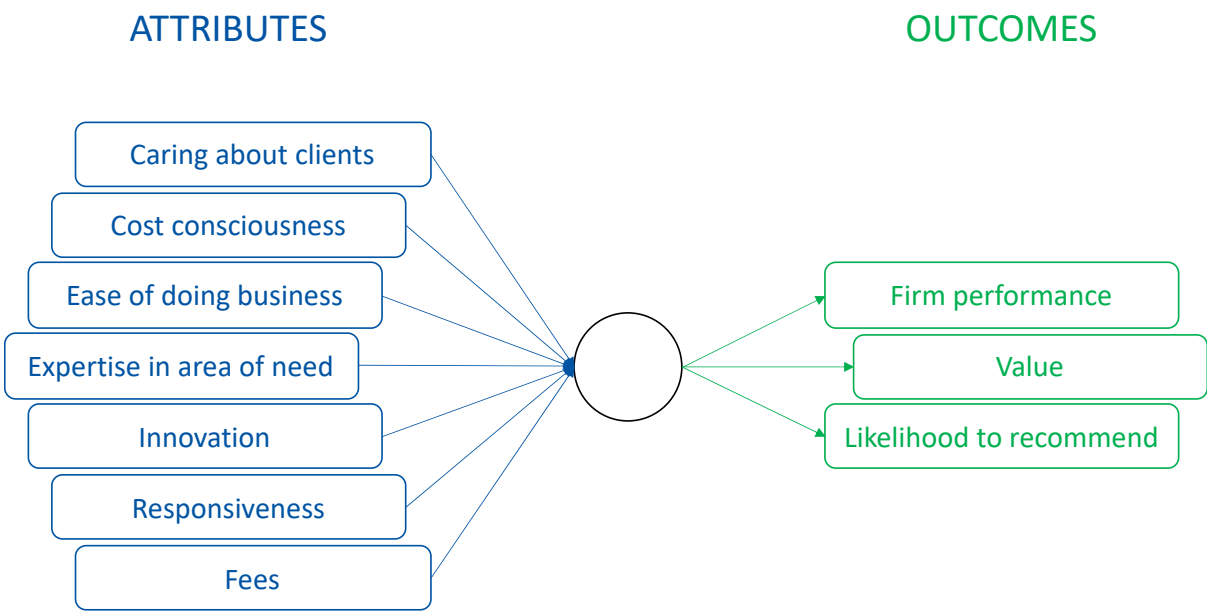
MCG Quantity Surveyors

Best Traffic & Transport Consulting Firm
(<$30m revenue)

IMPACT

An explanation of the attributes and outcomes measured

This graphic explains the relationship between the seven attributes and the three outcomes measured in our survey. An attribute describes a set of actions you can take to improve an outcome.



The explanations of our client service attributes in the following pages highlight what matters most to clients when they rate your firm.

The method for this analysis was straightforward. In Client Choice Awards surveys clients are asked what each attribute means to them. Their responses have been categorised and aggregated in the charts and narratives below.

The relative weight given by clients to each attribute's constituent elements (the bars in each chart) can be used in determining where to invest your firm's effort. Note that the vertical axis refers to '% of mentions', i.e. the mentions of a particular element as a percentage of all mentions. These mentions are not mutually exclusive, as some clients mention multiple elements when describing what an attribute means.

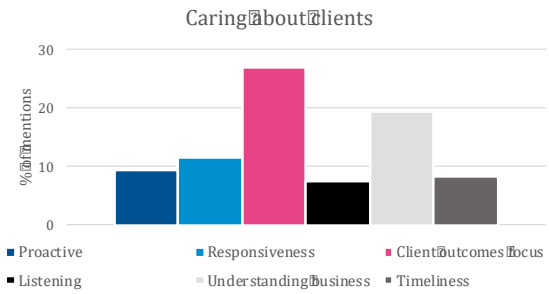
A high proportion of mentions is a rough proxy for importance. A high proportion of mentions means that when thinking about these attributes, specific elements of the attributes are top of mind for most clients.

These explanations should be used a guide to what the attributes mean to the majority of clients. They should complement, confirm and/or challenge what you already know about your clients. Using the attributes, you can tailor your service to clients' individual expectations and thereby increase your chances of improving outcomes for your firm.

Caring about clients

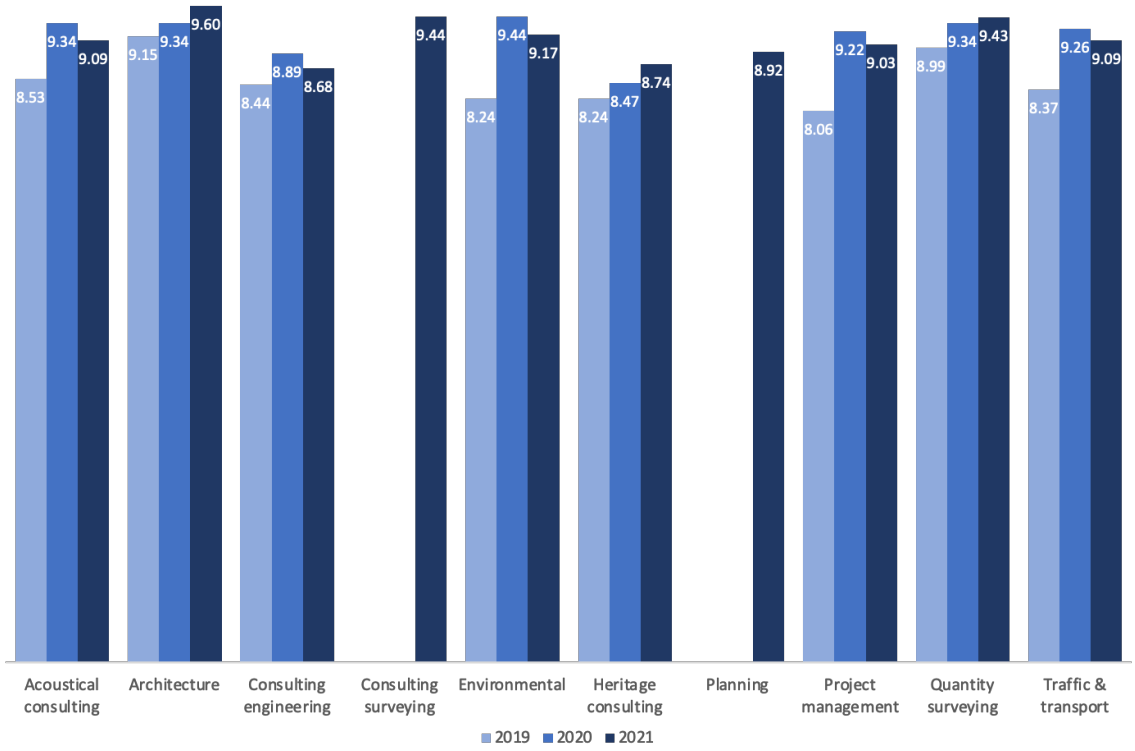
What clients look for

The most mentioned attribute in demonstrating 'caring about clients' is being focused on client outcomes (25%). Related to this element, and the next most important, was understanding business (19%), that is, demonstrating an understanding of the client's business. Responsiveness (12%), timeliness (8%), being proactive (9%) and demonstrating good listening skills (7%) all received a number of mentions from respondents.



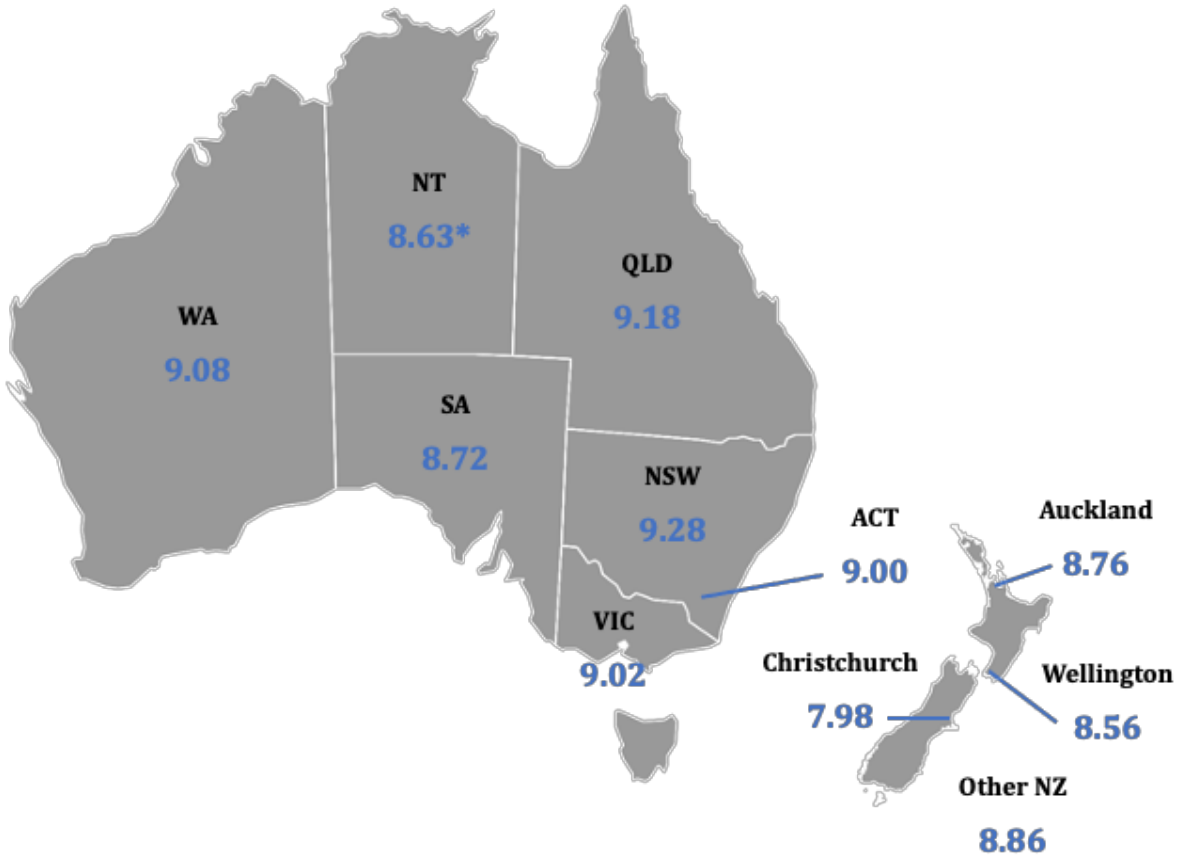
To score well in this attribute, firms should therefore focus on delivering advice that is client outcome focused, which can be achieved by understanding (the clients') business.

Caring about clients scores by profession (out of 10) for 2019, 2020 and 2021



** Please note: Consulting Surveying and Planning were new professions introduced in 2021 so no data exists for 2019 and 2020.*

Caring about clients scores by geography (out of 10)

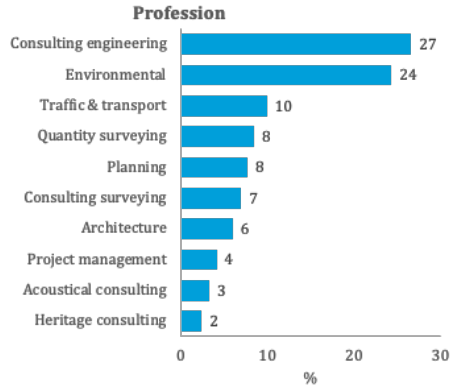


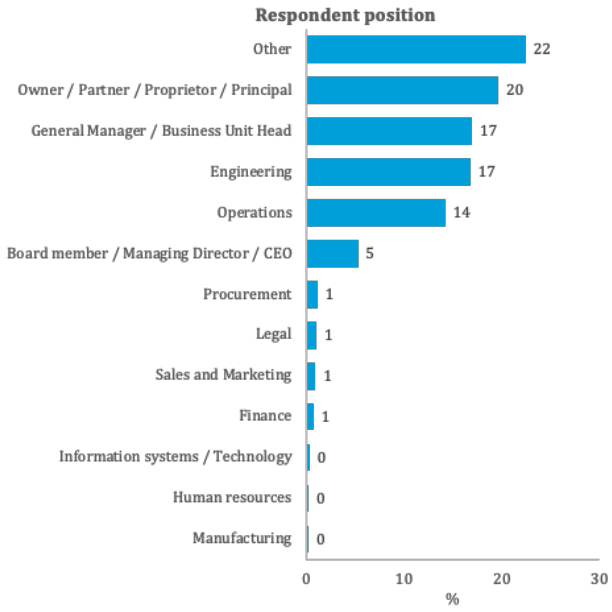
Caring about clients scores by client industry sector (out of 10)

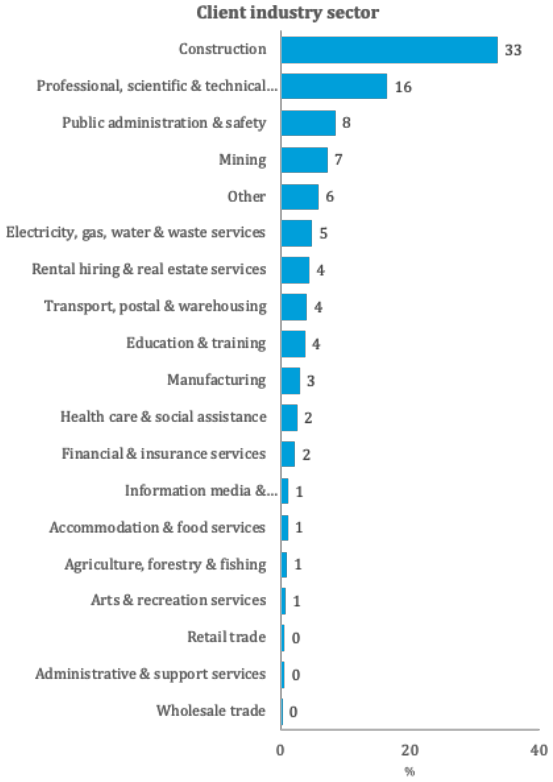
Accommodation & food services 9.64	Administrative & support services 9.86*	Agriculture, forestry & fishing 8.00	Arts & recreation services 9.67*
Construction 8.93	Education & training 9.29	Electricity, gas, water & waste services 8.94	Financial & insurance services 9.63
Health care & social assistance 9.44	Information media & telecommunications 9.40	Manufacturing 8.38	Mining 9.13
Professional, scientific & technical services 9.07	Public administration & safety 8.93	Rental hiring & real estate services 9.44	Retail trade 9.57*
Transport, postal & warehousing 9.09	Wholesale trade 8.75*	Other 9.27	

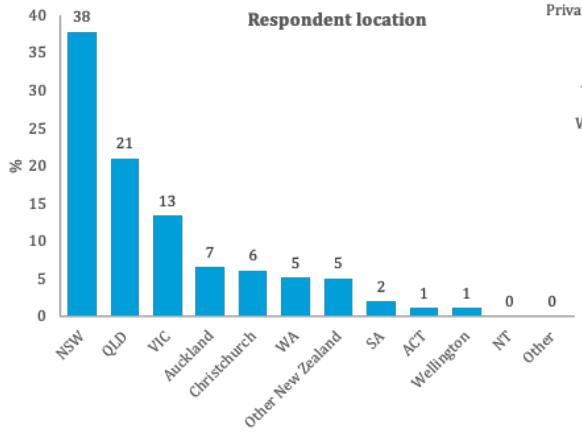
** Please note: asterisked figures are those which fail to meet **beaton**'s statistical significance threshold and so should be used as a guide only.*

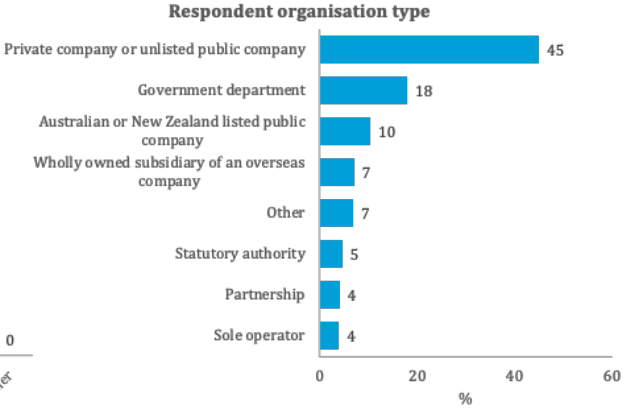
Profile of respondents who completed the survey











About beaton

The **beaton** team is dedicated to providing professional services firms with insights and advice related to their clients and business performance.

Founded more than 30 years ago, **beaton** has emerged as the leading 'Voice of Your Clients' specialist. We provide a world-class suite of client feedback-based products, services and value-adding advice. Professional services firms rely on us to help them improve their client service, brand health and profitability.

In recent years we've been dedicated to finding a way for many more firms of all sizes to gain deeper insights from their clients through the Client Choice Awards which in effect act as 'a giant syndicate' for data capture.

We currently cover the professions of accounting & consulting services, architecture, consulting engineering, environmental, IP & related services, landscape architecture, land surveying, law & related services, planning, project management, quantity surveying and transport.

Our sister company, FirmChecker, is a leading provider of ratings and review in accounting, law and related services.

To find out more about the services offered by **beaton** please visit our website.

Should you wish to get in touch to discuss these results further or find out how **beaton** may be able to help you or your firm, please complete the contact form here and one of our account managers will follow up with you.

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Voice of Your Clients