

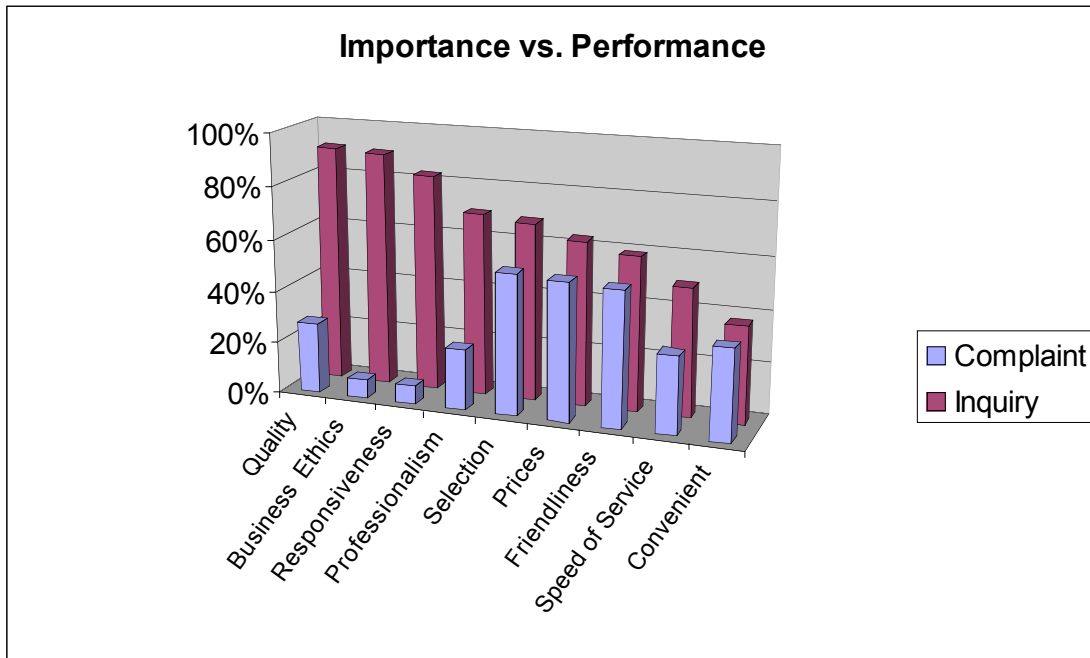
The BBB 90-Second Complaint Survey

Consumers who complain to the BBB report that the companies against which they lodge their complaints have failed to deliver along the most important dimensions of business performance: business ethics, quality and responsiveness. This finding is from a recent research initiative of the BBB to understand the root causes of consumer complaints.

Consumers who make a complaint about a company via the Bureau’s website are randomly selected and invited to complete a quick “90-second” survey in which they rate that company’s performance and also provide other information related to their decision to do business with the firm. The survey has been administered on the BBB’s website for over a year. The results reported here are based on responses from over 1,300 consumers.

These data have been compared to the results of another similar survey conducted online with other consumers who make inquiries to the BBB about other business. These “inquirers” are asked questions about factors that influence their choice of a firm. Chart 1 examines how the importance of these factors compares to the same factors that customers are asked to rate when they file a complaint against a particular firm. In other words, inquirers tell us about what things are important to consumers as they decide on a business, while complainers tell us “what went wrong” with respect to those factors.

Chart 1



The burgundy columns reflect the percentage of inquirers who rated the factor (quality, business ethics, etc.) as “Very Important” in influencing their decision to do business with a firm. The lavender bar corresponds to a “Good” or “Very Good” rating given to a firm by a consumer who intends to file a complaint against that firm.

The gap between importance and performance is greatest for the most important factors. For example, 90% of inquirers rate business ethics as a very important consideration in their choice of firm, while less than 10% of complainers find good ethics in the firm against which they are directing their complaint. More

utilitarian concerns, such as price and selection, do not appear to be contested areas of the complaint, and thus their appraisal is not dramatically affected. Actual percentages that correspond to Chart 1 are provided in the table below.

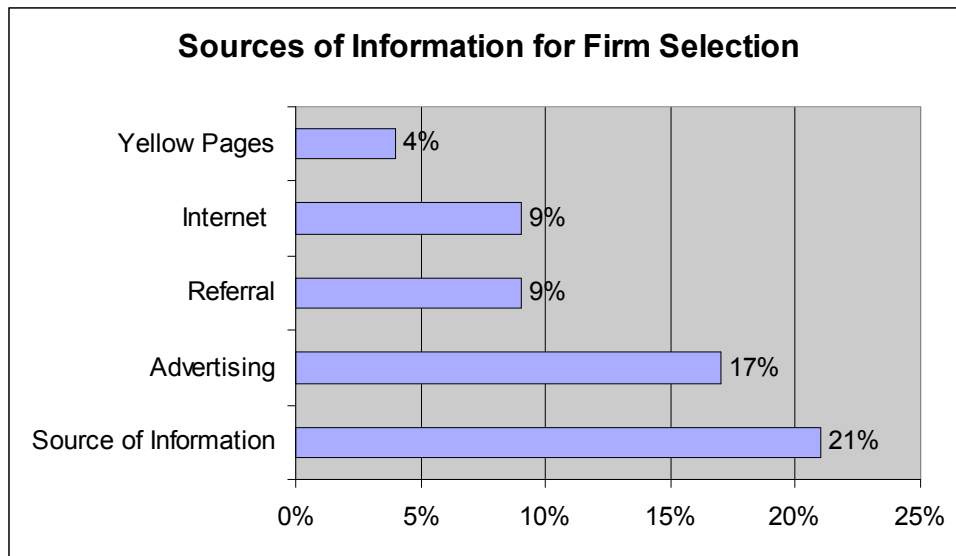
Selection Criteria	Complaint	Inquiry
Quality	27%*	91%**
Business Ethics	7%	90%
Responsiveness	7%	83%
Professionalism	23%	70%
Selection	54%	68%
Prices	53%	63%
Friendliness	52%	59%
Speed of Service	30%	49%
Convenient	35%	37%

*to be read: “27% of complainants rated the firm ‘Good’ or ‘Very Good’ with respect to quality.”

**to be read: “91% of inquirers rated quality as ‘Very Important’ in influencing their decision to do business with a firm.”

About 1 in 3 of complainants have already done business with the company about which they are complaining, and over 90% have complained directly to the company before taking their problem to the BBB. Information about the firm in question, comes from a variety of sources as summarized in Chart 2.

Chart 2



This analysis was provided by Dr. Jim Fisher of Saint Louis University and its Emerson Center for Business Ethics.