Stealing the limelight

Why some advisor directory listings win the audience over
Spot the showstoppers

This report delves into what makes a five-star advisor directory listing and why some listings attract many more referrals than others.

If you’d rather jump straight into some practical tips, see how to optimise your practice listing and how to write a brilliant practice description.
Shining a light on the data

We took a look at the use being made of the Xero advisor directory during a period of just under three weeks in January 2017.

During that time there were 412,400 views of listings and 14,550 referrals.

We then selected the 1,000 partners with the most views for more detailed analysis and the results are presented here.

Note: By referral we mean the potential client filled in a contact form that sent an email to the partner or clicked through to the partner’s website.
When a listing like this showed up in advisor directory search results it counted as a view.

I’m in the Retail industry and I’m based in Sydney.

Foxtail Accountancy Services
Accountant · Serves Sydney area. Office in Sydney

Helping small businesses achieve their dreams is our passion. We get your business set up and running smoothly on Xero with training and support tailored to your needs as your business grows. Your annual accounts and tax returns are all part of the service.

Industry experience
Professional services, Retail, Media and communications, more...

Xero add-on experience
WorkflowMax, Vend, Spotlight Reporting, more...

Learn more  Visit website

Contact

Filling in a contact form counted as a referral

A website visit also counted as a referral
The performance gap between hits and misses

Every advisor can play a part in the advisor directory. Some become the stars of the show, getting referral after referral, while others fade into the background.

The top performing listings motivate more than 10% of the people who view them to get in touch or seek more information. But for some listings, the referral rate is only 0.2% – just one referral in 500 views.
Some listings just don’t perform

Partners whose listings are not performing well are missing out on hundreds of client referrals as well as potential revenue.

- 4% of listings have a referral rate of over 10%
- 15% of listings have a 5–10% referral rate
- 26% of listings have a 2.5–5% referral rate
- 55% of listings have a referral rate of less than 2.5%
The stars are making it big time

A small proportion of listings get 10 or more referrals every 100 times they’re viewed. But more than half see fewer than 2.5 referrals per 100 views.

A small proportion of listings get the most interest

Top performers

Worst performers

Good performers

Poor performers

Referrals per 100 views

- Fewer than 1
- 1–2.5
- 2.5–5
- 5–10
- 10 or more
So how can you get a top billing?

The number of partner points you have affects how often your listing is viewed. But the number of referrals you then get depends on the quality of your listing. For example, a partner with 600 points and a top listing gets four times the number of referrals of a poorly performing one.

More partner points get you more views...

... but not necessarily more referrals.

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Top performing 10% of partner listings
Top performing 25%
Bottom performing 25%
What makes the stars stand out?

An inviting description seems to make all the difference.

What we noticed was that the best listing descriptions contain some really compelling propositions and an invitation or call to action.

They don’t distract people with unnecessary info and avoid statements that put people off completely.

A great description increases the number of referrals

![Chart showing the impact of different types of listing descriptions on referrals]
What the audience finds compelling

We observed that listings were more likely to win the hearts of the audience if they:

- evoked a sense that the partner will value them
- clearly and confidently said what the client will get
- showed that the advisor will be easy to work with
- demonstrated that the advisor goes the extra mile

Some compelling statements

Helping small businesses achieve their dreams is our passion.

We get your business set up and running smoothly on Xero with training and support tailored to your needs.

You’ll receive personal attention and prompt responses to your phone calls and emails.

We collaborate, educate and build an ongoing relationship with you.
What the audience is distracted by

We saw that some listings contained statements that were likely to confuse the audience or make them uncertain about the advisor’s ability to deliver. Others weren’t relevant to a small business owner, or were repeated elsewhere – like location and industry which the advisor directory already takes into account.

Some statements that are distracting

We aim to help you reach your business goals and want to make it easy for you.

We’re experienced with a wide range of apps including WorkflowMax, Vend and Deputy.

We make use of online technology to deliver services to entrepreneurial businesses.

We have offices in all the major cities and clients in the IT, retail, construction and hospitality industries.
What puts the audience off

We could see that some poorer performing listings had off-putting descriptions. They contained impersonal, foggy, and overly forceful statements. They didn’t give the reader a clear picture of what to expect and conveyed the impression that the advisor might be fixed and inflexible in the way they worked.

Some statements that put people off

The accounting division of our well-established nationwide firm services numerous clients.

We leverage the skills of a multi-disciplinary team combined with an outcome-focused approach and strong process leadership from our principals.

We know we’ve succeeded if we drive your business to faster growth and increased profits.

We’ll be with you holding your hand every step of the way so you don’t put a foot wrong.

So I’ll just be one more customer.

This is like working my way through dense fog.

Hey, I don’t want to be bulldozed.

I don’t want to be micro-managed or patronised either.
People don’t come if they’re not invited

A compelling description is even more effective if it ends with a clear call to action, such as an invitation to get in contact or find out more. Only 11% of the 1000 listings we looked at do that now – and it can really make a difference.

It’s not the length that counts

Whether the practice description in the advisor directory is long or short doesn’t seem to matter. It’s the content that counts. Picture and profiles of team members and videos help too.

It’s time to step into the spotlight

Take what you’ve learned here and check out our guide to writing a brilliant practice description

And explore other ways to optimise your advisor directory listing

Then create or update your advisor directory listing in Xero HQ

Any time you need help, just contact Xero Support