RESEARCH ISSUE ESCALATION PROCESS FOR VENDORS

Introduction:
In 2006, Gartner introduced a process for vendors (clients and non-clients) to submit a complaint about a particular piece of research, an analyst, a methodology, or anything else for that matter, which couldn't be resolved directly with Research. Since that time we have had a lot of experience with this process. While that original escalation process provided a structured path to issue resolution, as time has gone by we've realized it would be more helpful with a few important additions.

The revised process fundamentally remains the same:

- First try to resolve your problem directly with the analyst.
- If that fails, go to the analyst's manager.
- If that fails, contact the Ombudsman.

The updated process includes some important changes: it is more specific about how and when to initiate each action, how long it should take, what you should expect, who can place a "hold" on research publication, and why they would do it.

It also provides some best practices for mounting successful escalations. One of those best practices is to prepare: When you escalate, be prepared with details to support your assertions – and share them right up front. Prepare your product teams and executives to be ready right away to discuss your allegations and rationale with Research analysts and managers, as well as the Ombudsman. This will help everyone to understand the real issues on the table and take appropriate action.

Timing and Responsiveness:
We added a strong element of time constraints to the updated process – and details about what you need to do in each step. The reason for this is simple: Gartner is in the business of publishing research. The process for creating this research can be detailed and time-consuming. When an escalation is introduced, it often delays publication; this can strain the process itself, the people involved (analysts and vendors), and the Gartner clients waiting for the research. So we ask all parties to respond quickly to action requests and for Steps 2 and 3: each step should take no longer than three business days. While most escalations are resolved in less than a week, some take longer -- especially complex ones that involve multiple analysts and departments. We anticipate the timing guidelines will help accelerate even those complex ones.

All this said about the importance of timing, it's generally most expedient if complaints can be resolved directly between you and the Gartner analyst. In fact, this process starts with that interaction (Step 1). But when that isn't possible, we've developed Steps 2 through 4 to help resolve it.

Escalation Process Steps:
This process starts when you and the analyst have discussed your specific concerns – which extend beyond a simple difference of opinion -- and cannot resolve them. While the process focuses on research document-related issues, you can use it for other complaints relating to Gartner policies, methodologies, research positions, and analysts:

Step 1: Document your complaint. This can be a simple e-mail, but it should list the disputed issue(s) and factual evidence supporting your view. The list can include unanswered questions or concerns; for example, if you have completed vendor factual review and still don't think the analyst has carefully considered your input in his/her rating, repeat your questions/concerns. Documenting them again at this point will make them clear to those involved in all subsequent stages of the process.

- If the disputed research document will publish in 24 hours or less, skip to Step 3.
- If the dispute concerns a published research document, skip to Step 4.

Step 2: Send your complaint to the Gartner analyst (typically the primary author), copy the analyst's manager, and if applicable, your analyst relations contact.

- The Gartner analyst who receives the escalation will provide a response. For example, you might ask the analyst to explain the rationale for a specific caution.
- View this step as an opportunity to reach agreement by making sure each of you understands the same set of information -- not as a continuation of the ongoing discussions you've likely had with the analyst.
- If after this step either party feels that unresolved issues remain, go to Step 3.

Step 3: Either you or the analyst may escalate the issue to the Gartner analyst's manager, in writing. Copy the Gartner Ombudsman and, if applicable, your analyst relations contact. The manager may place a "hold" on any research documents in question at this point.

- Include your detailed list of concerns, relevant responses/rebuttals and a recap of any relevant timeline. The timeline should include the dates of relevant correspondence, briefings, SAS, etc.
- The manager will assess the analyst's response to your concerns, the process or methodology followed, and, if appropriate, the changes made to the research document(s).
- At this point the Ombudsman monitors the issue and may request updates, as well as involvement by other people at your company and/or at Gartner.
- Further discussion between you and Research (manager and analyst) may happen in this step to clarify understanding and explain points that remain unresolved.
- If this step resolves your complaint, the manager will release any "held" documents for publication.
- If this step does not resolve your complaint, either you or the manager should proceed to Step 4.

Step 4: The Ombudsman receives notification of unresolved issues from either party and notifies all appropriate parties.

- The Ombudsman determines whether there is a substantive basis for the complaint, assessing the fact base and defensibility of the claim. At this point the Ombudsman accepts or rejects the claim, and informs all appropriate parties of this decision.
- If the complaint is accepted, the Ombudsman conducts an independent analysis of both the complaint and evidence relating to the dispute, and moves it toward resolution.
- When appropriate, the Ombudsman will recommend or require changes to research documents to improve clarity or accuracy, or will take other actions, as needed, to ensure that Gartner research is clear, accurate, and unbiased.
- The Ombudsman is the final point of escalation within Gartner and may involve Gartner senior management, if necessary.
- When a case is closed, the Ombudsman notifies all relevant parties of the case's resolution.

If you need additional information or have questions, contact:
Gartner Office of the Ombudsman
ombudsman@gartner.com
+1 (203) 316-3334

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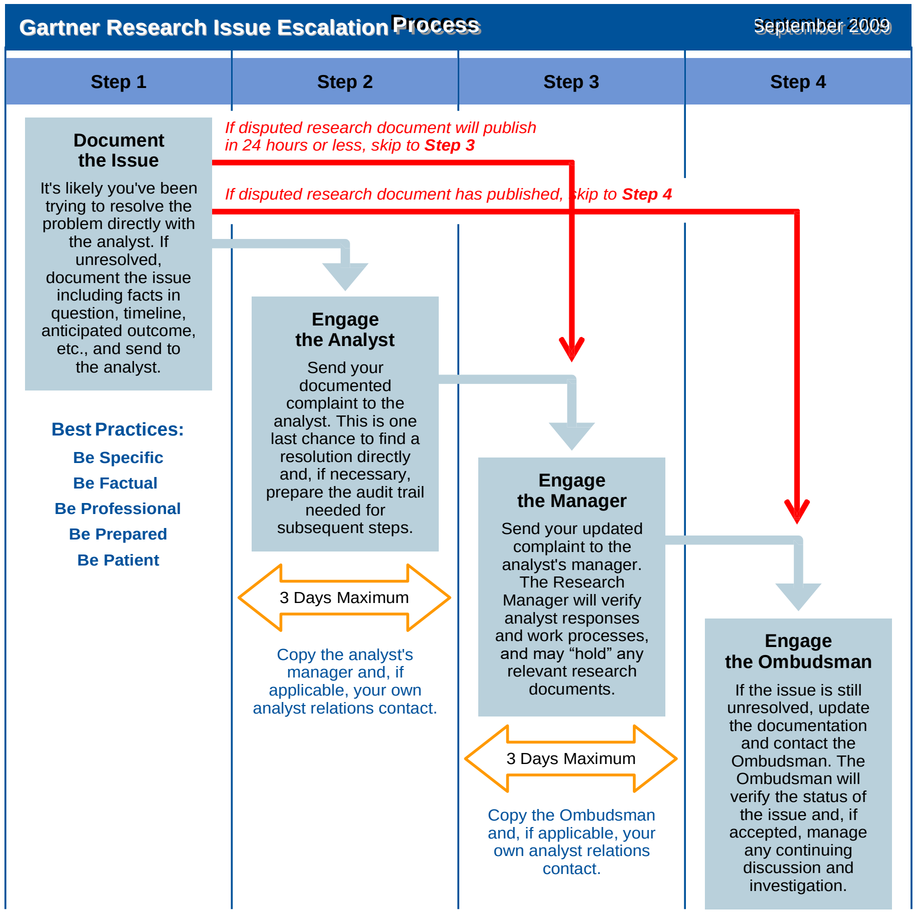

Figure 1- Gartner Research Issue Escalation Process for Vendors

Frequently Asked Questions:

Q. Why does Gartner have an Ombudsman?
A. The Office of the Ombudsman reports to the General Counsel outside of Gartner business unit management and is empowered to review and take actions as needed to act in the best interests of Gartner end-user clients. Information technology professionals place their trust in Gartner when seeking insight and advice. Fundamental to that trust is that Gartner analysts behave ethically and responsibly, free from undue influence or bias. The Gartner Ombudsman is one mechanism, along with other internal controls, which assures professionals that Gartner is committed to protecting their trust.

Q. I disagree with my evaluation in a Magic Quadrant (or any piece of research). When is it appropriate to escalate?
A. The Magic Quadrant process provides you with opportunities to present facts to the analysts and to question how they arrived at their positions [https://www.gartner.com/en/research/magic-quadrant]. If you believe that the analysts have their facts wrong, did not follow Gartner's methodology, have a bias against your company or toward another company, or have a conflict of interest, then you should escalate. If you simply disagree with Gartner's opinions, then an escalation is likely not appropriate. After all, Gartner is in the business of publishing its analysts' opinions. If you are uncertain about how to proceed, you can always ask the Ombudsman via ombudsman@gartner.com

Q. Will Gartner actually correct a document that contains errors, even if it already published?
A. Yes, Gartner's business depends on providing accurate information and advice. Of special concern are errors that have the potential to misinform a client. Gartner posts the corrections in the errata on gartner.com and, depending on the severity of the error, Gartner notifies clients who accessed the document of the correction.

Q. When is it appropriate to introduce new facts related to the issue during an escalation?
A. It is always appropriate to introduce new facts at any time during an escalation. What is not appropriate is to withhold facts that you may be reluctant to disclose until so late in the process that consideration would create another delay. Also, it's important to recognize that most analyses reflect events occurring during a specific period of time; for example, telling the analyst that you have signed 10 new customers this month may not be relevant in Magic Quadrant analysis that is typically looking at the past year.

Q. Won't an escalation damage my relationship with Gartner analysts?
A. The answer depends greatly on how you approach the escalation. One of the tenets for having an Ombudsman is to help ensure that the process remains cordial, professional, and productive. If you support that environment and remain professional, factual and on point, the end result from a relationship perspective will likely be positive. If you make personal attacks, or become unduly argumentative or threatening, then you run the risk of damaging the relationship. We offer the same advice for analysts who value their relationship with vendors.

Q. What are best practices for mounting a successful escalation?
A. Following these tips will help ensure a productive, impartial, and fair experience:

- Leave the emotion at home -- everyone recognizes that there is a lot at stake and showing your passion is important, but displays of negative emotions or unprofessional behavior simply derail the process.
- Prepare a compelling case – Be clear about the issue and provide relevant facts. For example, stating your dot position is wrong because there's no way your competitor has closed more deals than you have without providing details about the deals you've closed is not a compelling argument.
- Be willing to accept a difference of opinion – Everyone is entitled to their opinion, and there's no reason to expect that two people looking at the same fact base will arrive at the same conclusion. When it's clearly a difference of opinion, sometimes it's best to let it go and focus on what future steps can help the other party be convinced otherwise.
- If you are a Gartner client, remember that your client status has no bearing on research processes or positions – Familiarize yourself with Gartner Research processes and methodologies as they apply to all vendors. Use your client privileges throughout the year to maintain regular communication about your company's progress with the analyst, as this will help reduce surprises when the analyst publishes a report.

Q. What does the Ombudsman do once involved in an issue?
A. Depending on the severity and complexity of the issue, the Ombudsman often spends most of the time facilitating productive communications between the parties and investigating the veracity of both parties' claims. The Ombudsman uses the perspective of "what's in the best interest of Gartner's end-user clients" to look for solutions to the issue and make recommendations for improvement.