

## **RESEARCH & ADVISORY (R&A) ESCALATION PROCESS FOR VENDORS**

### **Introduction:**

Gartner has a standard process for vendors (clients and nonclients) to submit a complaint about research, an analyst, the methodology used to create the research, anything related to a draft or published document, or the research process itself. The escalation guidelines that follow provide a structured path to issue resolution, outlining the process steps, how and when to initiate each step, how long it should take, what you should expect, and who can place a “hold” on research publications. Also provided are best practices to consider when launching an escalation.

### **The fundamental steps of the escalation process are as follows:**

1. Try to resolve your problem directly with the analysts.
2. If that fails, escalate to the analyst’s manager.
3. If that fails, escalate to the Ombudsman.

**IMPORTANT:** Document your complaints.

Wherever possible, please attempt to resolve your issue directly within the Research & Advisory organization. The analyst and the manager are content experts who can have the most meaningful discussions about your market, technology and products — as well as R&A opinion about these topics.

### **Timing and Responsiveness:**

There are defined time constraints to the process and requirements for each step. Gartner is in the business of publishing research. When an escalation is introduced, it often delays publication. This delay can strain the process itself, those involved (analysts and vendors) and the Gartner clients waiting for the research. We ask all parties to respond quickly to action requests. Each step of the process generally should take no longer than two business days. It’s in everyone’s best interest to adhere to timing guidelines.

### **Escalation Process Steps**

After discussing your concerns with the analyst involved, and you feel that your issues are not being appropriately addressed, you can consider moving into the formal escalation process.

- If the disputed research document is scheduled to publish in 24 hours or less, skip to Step 2.
- If the dispute concerns a published research document, skip to Step 3.

#### **Step 1: Try to resolve your problem directly with the analyst.**

- Document your complaint in an email. List the disputed issues and factual evidence supporting your view and include all relevant supporting documents. The list may 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 the 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.
- Send your complaint to the Gartner analyst via email. Contact the primary author and copy the analyst’s manager.
- The analyst who receives the escalation will respond. For example, you might ask the analyst to explain the rationale for a caution statement. The analyst will address this question.

- View this step as an opportunity to reach agreement by making sure each of you understands the same set of information. This is not a continuation of the ongoing discussions you've likely already had with the analyst.
- This is the optimal time for vendors to work with analysts to find a resolution — the analysts are the content experts. Know that opinions only change if your presented facts merit a change.
- If either party feels that unresolved issues remain after this step, proceed to Step 3.

**Step 2: Escalate the issue to the analyst's manager via email.** Either you or the analyst may initiate the escalation. The manager may place a "hold" on any research documents in question.

- Include your remaining concerns, detail why you disagree with the analyst's findings and include the relevant responses/rebuttals from your previous interactions with the analyst.
- The manager will assess the responses to your concerns, the process or methodology followed in the creation of the research and, if appropriate, will recommend or require changes be made to the research documents or to the evaluation scoring.
- Further discussion between you and the manager/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 the document and it will proceed forward in the publication process.
- If this step does not resolve your complaint, proceed to Step 3.

**Step 3: Escalate to the Ombudsman.** Notify the Ombudsman via email. If necessary, the Ombudsman will place a "hold" on research documents in question if one is not already in place.

- **Claims Input Form (CIF) completion.** The Ombudsman will send you a CIF, which will serve as the primary communication platform throughout the investigation. Please complete the form, providing relevant claims and supporting evidence. Submit the completed form within two business days after receiving it from the Ombudsman.
- **The Ombudsman review.** During this process, the Ombudsman will review the claims, supporting evidence and will conduct an audit of the research process. The Ombudsman will review analyst responses to your claims and may request additional information to be provided or request a call to get clarity on your submissions.
- **Ombudsman recommendation.** The Ombudsman will determine if the analysts followed the correct procedures in the creation of the research and will identify any revisions that need to be addressed. If appropriate, the Ombudsman will recommend or require changes as a result of any missteps. This is the final point of the escalation process. The Ombudsman will notify you of the resolution and the reasoning behind the determination.

*Note: The Ombudsman will only recommend revisions to correct relevant fact-based errors or to improve factual clarity. It does not recommend revisions based on differing opinion between the analysts and the vendor.*

If you need additional information or have questions, contact:

Gartner Office of the Ombudsman

[ombudsman@gartner.com](mailto:ombudsman@gartner.com)

+1 (203) 316-3334

**Helpful Links:**

[Analyst Relations](#)

[Independence and Objectivity](#)

[Ombudsman](#)

[Methodologies](#)

## Helpful Research:

[How Markets and Vendors Are Evaluated in Gartner Magic Quadrants](#)

[How Products and Services Are Evaluated in Gartner Critical Capabilities](#)

## 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's end-user clients. Information technology professionals place their trust in Gartner when seeking insight and advice. Fundamental to that trust is knowing 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 research process provides you with opportunities to present facts to the analysts and to question how they arrived at their positions. If you believe 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 or the analyst's manager.

*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 errata in the Corrections section of 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, if relevant. However, in the interest of fairness to all providers and with an eye toward publishing research in a timely and relevant way, the Ombudsman does have guidelines and deadlines for each step of the process. For this reason, if new information is presented late in the process, even if it is relevant, we cannot always factor it into our analysis if it further delays the research process or would give an unfair advantage.

*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 does the Office of the Ombudsman do once it is involved in an issue?*

A. If your issue is an escalation, the Ombudsman will control all communications between Gartner and the vendor until the issue is resolved. This is to ensure all parties are informed of all relevant information and the issue moves forward productively.

## Best practices and tips for ensuring a productive, impartial and fair experience:

- **Leave the emotion at home:** We recognize that vendors can have a lot at stake and a strong opinion when escalating an issue. That said, displays of negativity or unprofessional behavior simply derail the process.
- **Make 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 competitors have closed more deals than you, without providing details about the deals you've closed, is not a compelling argument.
- **Be prepared and transparent:** Be prepared with details to support your assertions and share them upfront. Prepare your product teams and executives to be ready right away to discuss your allegations and rationale with all parties. This will help everyone understand the real issues and take appropriate action.
- **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 is best to let it go and focus on future collaboration.

- Focus on facts and the research methodology: The MQ, for example, is a comparative analysis based on the market definition and criteria set forth in the welcome packet. Structure your claims and evidence accordingly and stick to what you believe to be factual and process-related errors.
- If you are a Gartner client, remember 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.