# RESEARCH & ADVISORY (R&A) ESCALATION PROCESS FOR TECH OR SERVICE PROVIDERS

## Introduction:

Gartner has a standard process for providers to submit concerns about research, 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 ensure all concerns are fully investigated and addressed.

NOTE: If your concerns involve a published research document, contact the Office of the Ombuds.

## Timing and Responsiveness:

The escalation process requires all parties to respond quickly to action requests. Each step of the process should take no longer than two business days. While there can be exceptions, it is in everyone's interest to adhere to timing guidelines.

## Escalation Process Steps

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

- Document your claims in an email to the expert. List the disputed issues and provide fact-based evidence supporting your view and include all relevant supporting documents. The list may include unanswered questions or concerns.
- Send your complaint to the Gartner expert via email and copy the expert's manager.
- The expert who receives the escalation will respond. For example, you might ask the expert to explain the rationale for a caution statement. The expert will address this question.
- This is the optimal time for providers to work with experts to find resolution or a better understanding of the research focus. Know that opinions only change if you have provided independently verifiable and relevant facts that merit a change.
- If either party feels that unresolved issues remain after this step, proceed to Step 2.

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

- Include any remaining concerns in your email and detail why you disagree with the expert's findings. Add any relevant responses/rebuttals from your previous interactions with the expert.
- The manager will assess the responses to your concerns, the process or methodology used 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/expert may happen during this step to clarify understanding and explain points that remain unresolved.
- If this step resolves your claims, the manager will release the document and it will proceed forward in the publication process.
- If this step does not resolve your claims, you may proceed to Step 3.

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

- **Initial Call with the Ombuds.** Usually, the Ombuds will schedule a call with the escalating provider to get an understanding of the remaining issues. This is an opportunity for you to outline your concerns and to help prioritize which of your claims are most important. Following the call, the Ombuds will draft an initial Claims Input Form (CIF) based on the provider call, the past interactions (emails, recorded calls, etc.) with the experts during External Review and the TM escalation.
- **Claims Input Form (CIF) completion.** The Ombuds will send you the initial CIF document to review. You can revise it, add evidence, and submit the completed CIF form within two business days after receiving it from the Ombuds. This form will serve as the primary communication and response vehicle throughout to escalation to ensure that all issues receive responses.
- **The Ombuds Review.** During this process, the Ombuds will review the claims, supporting evidence and will conduct an audit of the research process. The Ombuds will review expert responses to your claims and may request additional information to be provided.
- **The Ombuds Findings.** The Ombuds will determine if the experts followed the defined procedures in the creation of the research and the research meets Gartner's standards of independence and objectivity. Ombuds will determine any changes that need to be made to the content, its publishing status, or other actions indicated from the investigation. This is the decisive point of the escalation process. The Ombuds will notify you of the resolution and the reasoning behind its findings.

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

**Helpful Links:**
Analyst Relations – Working with Gartner Experts
Office of the Ombuds
Principles of Independence and Objectivity
Research Methodologies

**Helpful Research:**
How Markets and Providers 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 Ombuds?**
A. The Office of the Ombuds 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 experts behave ethically and

responsibly, free from undue influence or bias. The Gartner Ombuds 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 experts and to question how they arrived at their positions. If you believe the experts 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 not appropriate. Gartner is in the business of publishing its experts' opinions. If you are uncertain about how to proceed, you can always ask the Ombuds or the expert's manager.

**Q. Will Gartner 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. However, in the interest of fairness to all providers and with an eye toward publishing research in a timely and relevant way, the Ombuds will follow Research Methodology guidelines and deadlines for each step of the research-creation process. For this reason, if, fact-based information, which was not submitted by the provider during the research data collection period, and is presented late in the process, it may not be possible to be factored into the analysis as it could further delay publication.

**Q. Will an escalation damage my relationship with Gartner experts?**
A. The answer depends on how you approach the escalation. One of the tenets for having an Ombuds 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 result from a relationship perspective will 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 experts who value their relationship with providers.

**Q. What process does Ombuds follow if you bring them an issue?**
A. If your issue is an escalation, the Ombuds will control all communications between Gartner and the provider 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 providers 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 is no way your competitors have closed more

deals than you, without providing details about the deals you have 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 factual issues and take appropriate action.
- **Be willing to accept a difference of opinion:** Everyone is entitled to their opinion, and there is no reason to expect that two people looking at the same fact base will arrive at the same conclusion. When it is 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 Magic Quadrant, 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 providers.