Client intake, first contact to engagement decision

A useful flow chart names the work, the owner, the system of record, the exception path, and the observable exit state at every stage. Stages 1 to 5 are delegable administrative work. Stages 6 and 7 require firm judgment.

01 RESPOND	Answer the enquiry against an explicit response target. Record source, time, notices shown, and the owner of the next step.
02 SCREEN	Identify requested service, jurisdiction, timing, and firm-defined administrative criteria. Poor fit exits quickly and courteously.
EXCEPTION	Poor fit, missing consent, uncertainty, or urgency takes a declared branch with a named owner and next action.
03 CONFLICTS INFORMATION	Collect party names and related entities for the firm's authorised conflicts process. Preparation is not clearance.
04 FACTS AND DOCUMENTS	Gather approved facts and documents while preserving the prospective client's own words, omissions, and uncertainty.
05 SCHEDULE	Book the consultation under firm rules, or record who owns the next scheduling action and response target.
06 ATTORNEY REVIEW	The prepared intake moves to an authorised professional. Conflicts clearance, assessment, advice, and risk judgment happen here.
07 DECIDE AND RECORD	Engage, decline and refer, request more information, or assign follow-up. Record the firm-owned disposition and next owner.

Professional boundary. Administrative intake does not clear conflicts, assess merits, give advice, accept a client, establish representation, or decide what a prospective client should do. Those decisions remain with authorised firm professionals.

Read the branch, not only the happy path

01 INTERRUPT	02 OWN	03 RECORD
A possible conflict, missing consent, urgent circumstance, or policy exception stops the normal path.	An authorised person or queue accepts the complete state and owns the remaining judgment.	The reason, owner, next action, response target, and terminal state return to the authoritative record.

Free to reuse and adapt. Canonical reference: koltra.ai/answers/client-intake-process-flow-chart/

Turn every box into a provable step

The arrows are not enough. Complete these five fields for every stage, then test the path with ordinary enquiries and the exceptions the firm actually sees.

FIELD	QUESTION TO ANSWER	EXAMPLE
Required input	What must be known before this stage begins?	Party names present before a conflicts search is submitted
Owner	Who is responsible for the work now?	Intake team owns missing information; attorney owns professional review
System of record	Where must authoritative state be written?	Intake CRM, conflicts system, calendar, or matter system
Exception path	What stops or diverts the normal path?	Possible conflict, urgent circumstance, missing consent, or poor fit
Exit state	What observable event proves this stage ended?	Consultation booked, review accepted, information requested, or declined

Use declared exit states instead of 'done'

CONSULTATION BOOKED	Attorney, time, required information, confirmation, and calendar record agree.
MORE INFORMATION	Missing items, request, deadline, and follow-up owner are recorded.
PROFESSIONAL REVIEW	An authorised person or queue accepted the intake and owns the remaining judgment.
DECLINED / REFERRED	Firm-owned disposition, permitted communication, referral if any, and delivery are recorded.
FOLLOW-UP OWNED	The next attempt, date, and named owner remain visible.
UNRESOLVED	No authoritative outcome or accepted owner can be proved. Never report this as completion.

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Workshop checks

Test a possible conflict, missing consent, urgent circumstance, out-of-scope request, missing document, scheduling exception, unresponsive prospect, failed system write, and unaccepted professional handoff. For each one, prove what stopped, what remains known, who owns the next action, and what state was written.

Editable checklist: koltra.ai/downloads/client-intake-process-workshop-checklist.md / CC BY 4.0 / Educational material, not legal advice or a Koltra product claim.