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# Law Department Compensation Survey

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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# Introduction

Uncertainty and a lack of reliable data often complicate compensation decisions for in-house legal professionals. Many existing resources fail to provide a complete picture, either due to a narrow focus on specific job titles or a skewed sample that inflates market rates. This leaves professionals and organizations alike without the trusted benchmarks needed to make informed decisions.

To address this gap, the Association of Corporate Counsel (ACC) and Empsight International, LLC conduct an annual compensation survey of in-house legal professionals across the United States, with this year's survey receiving 1,632 respondents. The **2025 Law Department Compensation Survey Executive Summary Report** provides a much-needed, accurate snapshot of compensation packages for in-house counsel and legal operations professionals across the country.

This summary report offers detailed breakdowns of **base salaries, short-term incentives, long-term incentives, and total compensation** for 29 in-house legal job titles, covering professionals within a diverse range of industries and organization sizes. But the value extends beyond the compensation data: we also provide essential context on perquisites, workplace policies, key trends, including remote work, job satisfaction, and the skills that drive success in today's legal departments.

## Key features of this report include:

- **Comprehensive data:** Covering a wide range of job titles, industries, and company sizes.
- **Actionable insights:** Beyond salary, we provide information on benefits, remote work, and in-demand skills.
- **Reliable benchmarks:** Our data is based on a large sample of in-house legal professionals.

For in-house legal professionals, this report is an indispensable tool for understanding market rates, negotiating compensation, and planning career advancement. It also supports long-term career planning by providing data on the hierarchy of roles within in-house legal departments and how compensation progresses across levels. It's a reliable resource built on a large, diverse sample, ensuring the insights you gain are both actionable and trustworthy. We want to thank those who participated in the survey. We believe these insights will be a valuable asset to the entire in-house legal community. All survey participants receive the full compensation benchmarking results (in Excel format), which includes full statistical distributions for all 29 job positions and demographic segments.

# About the Data

## SELF-REPORTED DATA VERSUS COMPANY-SOURCED DATA

This executive summary presents the findings from our self-reported compensation survey. Participants reported their own compensation data through an online questionnaire. While this method offers valuable insights, it is important to note that it differs from our company-sourced survey.

In our company-sourced survey, organizations submit compensation data on behalf of the organization for all legal positions. This approach often involves HR compensation departments or legal operations for larger companies or general counsel for smaller ones. This alternative data collection method provides a broader organizational perspective on compensation. Please note that this executive summary focuses exclusively on the results of the self-reported survey.

## WE OFFER A RANGE OF COMPENSATION BENCHMARKING REPORTS

We offer a variety of reports tailored to your specific benchmarking needs. Here is a breakdown:

- **Self-Reported Edition:** The self-reported edition focuses on the individual-level self-reported survey data from individuals in companies of all sizes. It provides a comprehensive overview with full statistical breakdowns for 29 job titles across relevant demographics, allowing you to compare your compensation with your peers.
- **Company-Sourced Editions (Large & Mid-Sized Companies):** These reports leverage data directly submitted by organizations on behalf of their staff, offering a broader view of compensation for over 90 legal job titles. Each report caters to a specific company size (large or mid-sized) and includes an interactive Excel file. This file allows seamless upload to HRIS or Market Pricing systems, enabling you to compare your data with other internal and external sources. Learn more at [acc.com/compensation](https://acc.com/compensation).

## DATA CONFIDENTIALITY AND SAFE HARBOR COMPLIANCE

**Your data privacy is our top priority.** We adhere to strict guidelines safeguarding the confidentiality of compensation information. To maintain data integrity and protect participant anonymity, we employ several robust measures:

- **Data Aggregation:** Compensation data is only reported when there are at least five participants, preventing the identification of individual organizations.
- **Data Weighting:** No single organization's data accounts for more than 25 percent of any reported statistic, ensuring data representativeness without undue influence from any single entity.
- **Data Effective Date:** Compensation data's effective date is March 1, 2025 to ensure a minimum of three months before publication to further protect confidentiality.
- **Statistical Rigor:** Additional participant thresholds are applied when calculating percentiles to maintain data accuracy and confidentiality.

By implementing these rigorous standards, we provide reliable compensation benchmarks while upholding the highest levels of data protection. Learn more about our [data confidentiality practices](#).

## TERMS & DEFINITIONS

TERM	DEFINITION
<b>ANNUAL BASE SALARY</b>	Annual base salary paid to the incumbent – the fundamental compensation element.
<b>SHORT-TERM INCENTIVE (STI) ELIGIBLE %</b>	The average percent of incumbents who are eligible to participate in a short-term incentive program.
<b>SHORT-TERM INCENTIVE (STI) TARGET %</b>	The value of bonus opportunities, at target, expressed as a percentage of base salary.
<b>SHORT-TERM INCENTIVE (STI) AMOUNT \$</b>	Actual amount of bonus paid to the incumbent in the current year for the prior full year's performance.
<b>TOTAL CASH \$</b>	Total cash is the combination of base salary and any annual variable compensation (bonus or incentive). This value includes companies that paid bonuses / incentives and those that did not.
<b>LONG-TERM INCENTIVE (LTI) ELIGIBLE %</b>	This provides the number of incumbents who are eligible to participate in long-term incentive arrangements as a percentage of the total number of incumbents reported.
<b>LONG-TERM INCENTIVE (LTI) TARGET %</b>	The value of long-term incentive opportunities, at target, expressed as a percentage of annual base salary.
<b>LONG-TERM INCENTIVE (LTI) TARGET AMOUNT \$</b>	The planned long-term incentive opportunity (LTI Target %) multiplied by the annual base salary.
<b>TOTAL DIRECT COMPENSATION \$</b>	The combination of base salary and the target STI \$ and target LTI award \$.
<b>MEDIAN</b>	The middle value of the reported data array.
<b>90TH PTILE.</b>	The 90th percentile of the reported data array.
<b>MEAN (AVERAGE)</b>	The statistical average of the reported data.



## JOB TITLE CATEGORY GROUPINGS

To simplify the presentation of the executive summary results and in some cases, due to data availability, job titles were aggregated into the groupings presented in the table below.

#	SURVEY JOB FAMILY CATEGORY	SURVEY JOB TITLES INCLUDED
1	<b>GENERAL COUNSEL - SINGLE LAWYER</b>	General Counsel - Single Lawyer
2	<b>GENERAL COUNSEL/CHIEF LEGAL OFFICER</b>	General Counsel & Corporate Secretary / CLO
3	<b>GENERAL COUNSEL - DIVISION/SUBSIDIARY</b>	SVP General Counsel - Division SVP Subsidiary General Counsel VP Subsidiary General Counsel
4	<b>DEPUTY GENERAL COUNSEL</b>	SVP Deputy General Counsel
5	<b>ASSOCIATE GENERAL COUNSEL</b>	SVP Associate General Counsel VP Associate General Counsel VP Associate General Counsel - Division VP Associate General Counsel - Business Line / Legal Specialty
6	<b>MANAGING ATTORNEY</b>	Director Managing Attorney Managing Attorney
7	<b>EXPERT ATTORNEY</b>	Expert Attorney
8	<b>SENIOR ATTORNEY</b>	Senior Attorney
9	<b>ATTORNEY</b>	Intermediate Attorney Associate Attorney Developing Associate
10	<b>VICE PRESIDENT, LEGAL OPERATIONS</b>	VP Legal Operations
11	<b>DIRECTOR, LEGAL OPERATIONS</b>	Sr. Director Legal Operations Director Legal Operations
12	<b>MANAGER, LEGAL OPERATIONS</b>	Sr. Manager Legal Operations Manager Legal Operations
13	<b>ANALYST, LEGAL OPERATIONS</b>	Senior Legal Operations Analyst Intermediate Legal Operations Analyst Associate Legal Operations Analyst
14	<b>CORPORATE SECRETARY (NOT GC)</b>	SVP Corporate Secretary (Not GC) VP Corp Secretary (Not GC) Director Corporate Secretary (Not GC)

# Pay Drivers & Key Findings

Compensation is influenced by a wide array of factors. This high-level executive summary provides a comparative analysis of the data collected through our survey. We have identified clear correlations between specific variables and reported compensation, though it is important to acknowledge that the survey captures a limited subset of these influential factors. The subsequent section highlights **five key compensation drivers** and presents additional insights derived from the 1,632 survey respondents.



## COMPANY REVENUE

Across all positions surveyed, compensation is consistently higher in larger organizations compared to those in smaller organizations. Chief Legal Officers (CLOs) in companies with revenue greater than \$5 billion make 44 percent more in base salary and 173 percent more in total target compensation compared to CLOs in organizations with revenue less than \$1 billion.



## LEGAL SPECIALTY

Although compensation varies significantly across job positions, practice areas such as securities, antitrust, and bankruptcy/creditor law tend to pay higher base salaries and total compensation. Information technology (IT), corporate contracts, and entertainment tend to pay less overall. It is important to note that there is less variation in pay across practice areas among more senior management-level positions, as legal specialty areas are less relevant for these roles on average.



## LAW SCHOOL ATTENDED

In-house counsel who graduated from top 20-ranked law schools consistently earn more than their peers. These lawyers command base salaries that are up to 39 percent higher and total compensation up to 36 percent higher than those who attended other law schools.



## LAW SCHOOL GRADUATION YEAR

For most roles, compensation directly correlates with experience. Both base salary and total cash compensation show a steady incline as professionals gain more years in the field. This trend is especially pronounced for roles like Attorney, Senior Attorney, and Associate General Counsel, where compensation rises consistently with each additional year of experience.



## PREVIOUS WORK EXPERIENCE

Law firm experience provides a clear financial advantage for in-house legal professionals, with the most significant benefits seen at both the beginning and senior stages of a career. For example, an Attorney with prior law firm experience earns a median base salary that is 16 percent higher and total cash compensation that is 18 percent higher than peers without this background. CLOs with prior firm experience earn 21 percent more in base salary and 13 percent more in total cash compensation.



16%

of respondents transitioned directly from law school to in-house roles, bypassing law firms, government, and other career options. Conversely, 77 percent of respondents report having law firm experience prior to transitioning to an in-house career.



17%

of respondents received a promotion this past year, with 13 percent receiving a base salary increase of greater than 20 percent as a result of the promotion. Those who were not promoted received an average merit increase of 3.5 percent and a median increase of 3.0 percent.



28%

of respondents report changing jobs in the past two years, a modest increase from 25 percent in last year's survey. Looking ahead, however, fewer professionals plan to move. Only 17 percent say they are likely to change jobs in the coming year, a decline from the 20 percent reported last year.



44%

of respondents report experiencing moderate levels of stress in their job, and another 29 percent describe their stress as mild. However, a significant minority—more than one in five professionals—face high stress. Eighteen percent report high stress that impacts their performance, and another four percent are experiencing severe stress or burnout, leading them to consider a career change.



# Compensation Highlights

## BASE SALARY & SHORT-TERM INCENTIVES

JOB TITLE	BASE SALARY		STI ELIGIBLE	STI TARGET	STI AMOUNT		TOTAL CASH	
	Median	90th Ptile.	Average	Median	Median	90th Ptile.	Median	90th Ptile.
General Counsel - Single Lawyer	\$234K	\$340K	77%	20%	\$36K	\$150K	\$255K	\$400K
General Counsel/Chief Legal Officer	\$330K	\$506K	96%	35%	\$91K	\$350K	\$410K	\$764K
General Counsel - Division/Subsidiary	\$279K	\$358K	90%	30%	\$75K	\$199K	\$341K	\$505K
Deputy General Counsel	\$280K	\$371K	96%	30%	\$82K	\$187K	\$368K	\$514K
Associate General Counsel	\$245K	\$340K	93%	25%	\$65K	\$135K	\$294K	\$450K
Managing Attorney	\$239K	\$307K	95%	25%	\$49K	\$100K	\$283K	\$389K
Expert Attorney	\$227K	\$285K	86%	25%	\$42K	\$89K	\$260K	\$358K
Senior Attorney	\$201K	\$260K	92%	20%	\$33K	\$80K	\$228K	\$319K
Attorney	\$148K	\$204K	83%	15%	\$16K	\$45K	\$160K	\$230K
Vice President, Legal Operations	\$246K	<10	100%	30%	\$86K	<10	\$285K	<10
Director, Legal Operations	\$178K	\$263K	93%	20%	\$35K	\$59K	\$212K	\$313K
Manager, Legal Operations	\$150K	\$168K	82%	13%	\$13K	\$32K	\$162K	\$183K
Analyst, Legal Operations	\$88K	\$123K	71%	8%	\$10K	<10	\$95K	\$137K
Corporate Secretary (Not GC)	\$266K	\$317K	100%	30%	\$36K	\$104K	\$311K	\$384K

Note: Median values reported for positions with five or more respondents. Ninetieth percentiles reported for positions with ten or more respondents.

## LONG-TERM INCENTIVES

JOB TITLE	LTI ELIGIBLE	LTI TARGET	LTI TARGET AMOUNT		TOTAL TARGET DIRECT COMP	
	Average	Median	Median	90th Ptile.	Median	90th Ptile.
General Counsel - Single Lawyer	31%	25%	\$66K	\$780K	\$280K	\$482K
General Counsel/Chief Legal Officer	63%	40%	\$134K	\$1.02M	\$503K	\$1.46M
General Counsel - Division/Subsidiary	59%	30%	\$76K	\$228K	\$378K	\$729K
Deputy General Counsel	67%	30%	\$100K	\$251K	\$424K	\$730K
Associate General Counsel	59%	30%	\$78K	\$186K	\$338K	\$585K
Managing Attorney	57%	25%	\$59K	\$118K	\$319K	\$475K
Expert Attorney	42%	25%	\$45K	\$94K	\$274K	\$416K
Senior Attorney	43%	20%	\$40K	\$95K	\$247K	\$353K
Attorney	17%	17%	\$32K	\$50K	\$165K	\$260K
Vice President, Legal Operations	71%	<5	<5	<10	\$308K	<10
Director, Legal Operations	48%	20%	\$50K	<10	\$220K	\$350K
Manager, Legal Operations	18%	<5	<5	<10	\$168K	\$196K
Analyst, Legal Operations	18%	<5	<5	<10	\$88K	\$135K
Corporate Secretary (Not GC)	83%	30%	\$90K	\$165K	\$413K	\$583K

Note: Median values reported for positions with five or more respondents. Ninetieth percentiles reported for positions with ten or more respondents.

## COMPANY REVENUE

The results reveal a consistent trend: company size is a primary determinant of legal professionals' compensation earnings potential. This chart compares median compensation for various in-house roles in companies with revenues under US\$1 billion and those with revenues of US\$5 billion or more, painting a clear picture of a widening compensation gap as in-house legal professionals climb the corporate ladder.

The most striking finding is the substantial difference in compensation for the highest-ranking legal officers. General Counsel and Chief Legal Officers at large companies earn a median base salary which is 44 percent higher than that of their counterparts at smaller organizations. The difference in total target direct compensation is even more dramatic, with large-company CLOs (\$5 Billion+ in revenue) pulling in a median value exceeding US\$1 million, 173 percent more than the total target compensation of CLOs in smaller companies. This massive gap makes clear the significant role that variable compensation, such as short and long-term incentives, play at the executive level in large organizations.

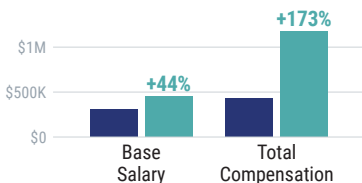
The trend of higher compensation in larger companies is not confined to the C-suite. It is a consistent theme across all positions, though the magnitude varies. The data shows a significant jump in compensation for Associate General Counsel in large companies, where median base salary is 36 percent higher. The total compensation gap for this role is 75 percent, reinforcing the idea that variable pay is a key differentiator. Other leadership roles like Deputy General Counsel and Managing Attorney see a meaningful boost, with total compensation being 27 percent and 31 percent higher, respectively, at large companies.

The financial benefits of working for a larger organization are also evident at mid-level and specialized positions. An entry-level or mid-level Attorney at a large company earns a median base salary 27 percent higher than those in the same position in smaller companies. The total compensation for this role is 35 percent higher. Similarly, Senior Attorneys and Expert Attorneys see a 11-to-15 percent bump in base salary and a 22-to-23 percent increase in total target direct compensation. LTI eligibility is greater than 50 percent at larger organizations with revenues of \$5 billion or more, compared to around 30 percent in smaller organizations. This suggests that the financial advantage of a large company begins early in a legal professional's career.

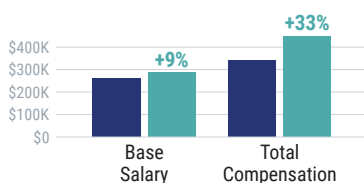
It is unequivocally clear that organization size is a critical factor in determining compensation for in-house legal professionals. While all roles benefit from being in a larger organization, the financial reward is disproportionately high at the senior executive level, primarily driven by a dramatic increase in variable pay.

### COMPANIES WITH UNDER \$1B IN REVENUE VS. COMPANIES WITH \$5B OR MORE

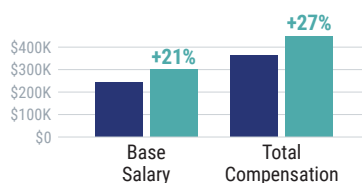
General Counsel/  
Chief Legal Officer



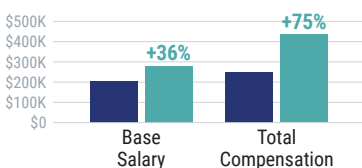
General Counsel -  
Division/Subsidiary



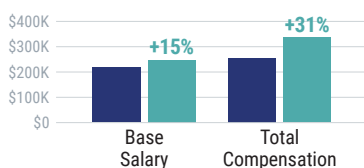
Deputy General Counsel



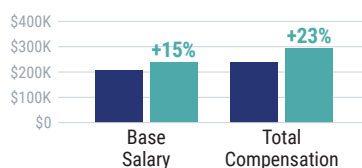
Associate General Counsel



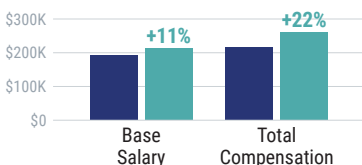
Managing Attorney



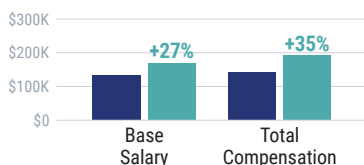
Expert Attorney



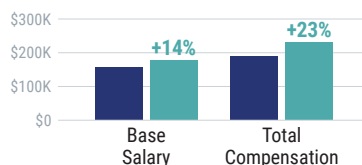
Senior Attorney



Attorney



Director, Legal Operations



## LEGAL SPECIALTY

Highly specialized and complex fields are often associated with the highest earning potential across various job titles, from CLO to entry-level Attorney. Specialized individual-contributor attorneys tend to be the most specialized and are also the group with the most consistent reporting of specific areas of specialization. By contrast, attorneys at more senior levels are more focused on management and operate as generalists rather than specialists. At the top is securities law, demonstrating the high-stakes nature of this legal specialty within corporate legal departments. Attorneys specializing in Securities consistently command some of the highest median total cash compensation, reflecting the demand for expertise in regulatory compliance, public offerings, and corporate finance.

Antitrust specialists also command premium compensation. These lawyers are crucial for ensuring fair competition, advising on mergers and acquisitions to avoid monopolistic practices, and defending against antitrust litigation. Their work directly impacts a company's market position and can prevent costly government investigations or private lawsuits.

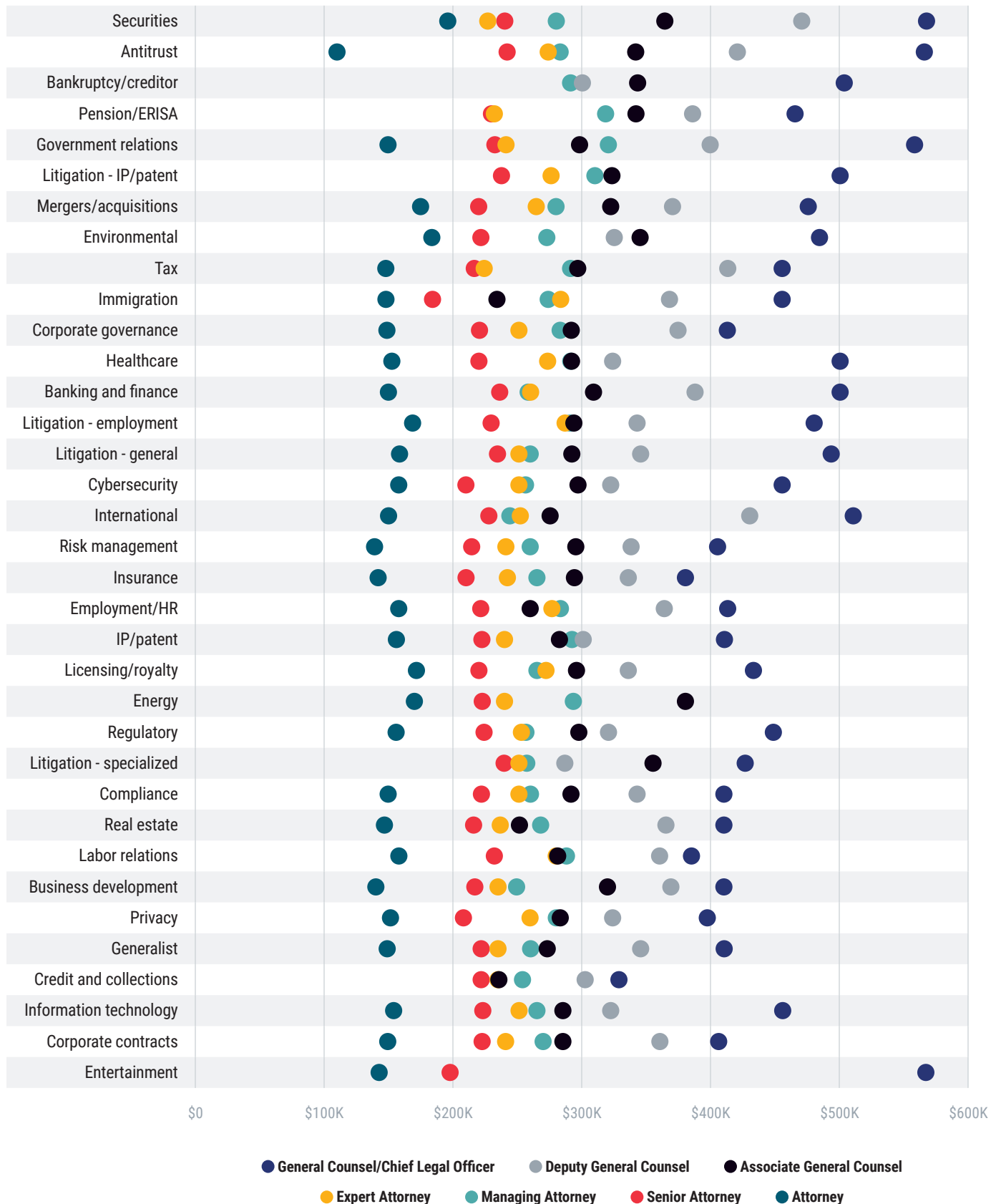
The high compensation in bankruptcy/creditor law underscores its role in crisis management and financial restructuring. These attorneys are essential during periods of financial distress, guiding companies through complex insolvencies, protecting assets, and negotiating with creditors. The high stakes and technical nature of this work drive its value.

Pension/ERISA (Employee Retirement Income Security Act) is another highly compensated field. This area involves intricate regulations governing employee benefit plans, retirement funds, and fiduciary duties. Given the significant financial liabilities and compliance burdens associated with employee benefits, highly skilled attorneys are critical for avoiding costly penalties and litigation.

Completing the top five specialties is government relations. In-house counsel specializing in this area are highly compensated due to their strategic importance in influencing public policy and navigating the political landscape. These attorneys work at the intersection of law and lobbying, ensuring a company's interests are represented in legislative and regulatory processes, which can directly impact business operations and profitability.

These practice areas are characterized by their specialized knowledge requirements, direct impact on a company's financial health and regulatory standing, and the high stakes involved in potential non-compliance or adverse outcomes. Companies are likely willing to pay a premium for legal talent that can effectively manage these complex and critical aspects of their business.

## MEDIAN TOTAL CASH COMPENSATION





## LAW SCHOOL ATTENDED

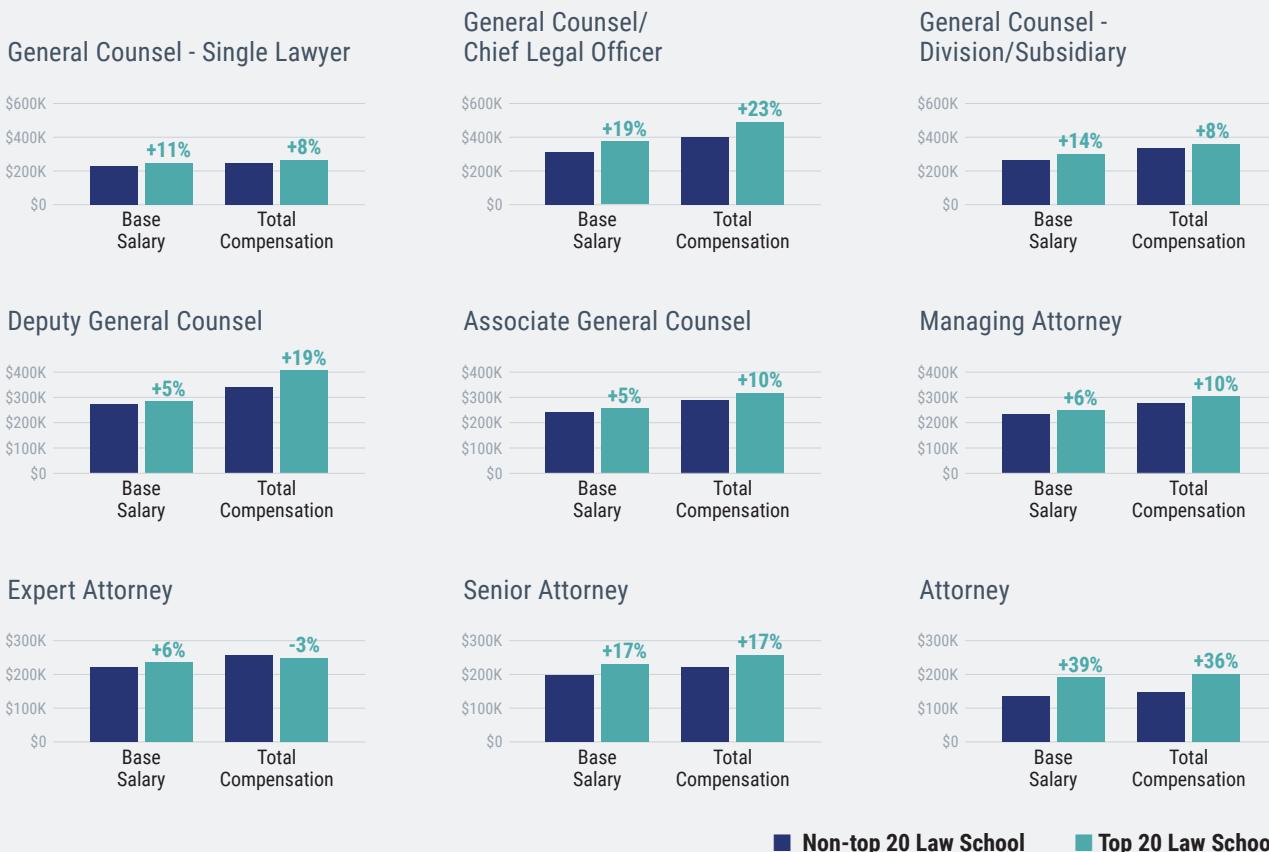
Another factor correlated with lawyer compensation is having attended a top 20 law school. While a prestigious degree does not guarantee a higher salary in every scenario, our data suggests it often provides a significant advantage, particularly at earlier career stages.

The most pronounced difference in compensation appears at the Attorney level. Lawyers from top 20 law schools command a median base salary that is 39 percent higher than their counterparts from non-top 20 schools. Their total cash compensation is also 36 percent higher. This suggests that a top-tier law degree provides a substantial initial boost, potentially opening doors to higher-paying entry-level positions or enabling stronger negotiation power. The trend continues for Senior Attorneys, who see a 17 percent increase in both base salary and total cash compensation if they graduate from a top 20 school.

As legal professionals advance into more senior roles, the percentage difference, while still present, can become less uniform. For CLOs, those from top 20 schools earn a median base salary 19 percent higher and total cash compensation 23 percent higher. This indicates that the prestige factor retains considerable influence at the highest echelons. However, for roles like Deputy General Counsel and Associate General Counsel, the base salary difference shrinks to around five-to-six percent, though the total cash compensation difference remains more substantial (10-to-19 percent).

Attending a top 20 law school generally correlates with higher compensation potential in in-house legal departments, particularly at the entry and mid-levels of a career. While the advantage can be substantial, especially in total cash compensation, it appears that for some highly specialized senior roles demonstrated expertise and performance may become more dominant factors in determining pay.

### BASED SALARY AND TOTAL CASH COMPENSATION BASED ON SCHOOL ATTENDED



## YEARS OF EXPERIENCE

The following charts map base salary and total cash compensation against years of experience for nine in-house legal positions, revealing a clear and generally consistent relationship: as years of experience increase, so does compensation. This upward trend is observable across nearly all job titles, though the slope and magnitude of the increase vary.

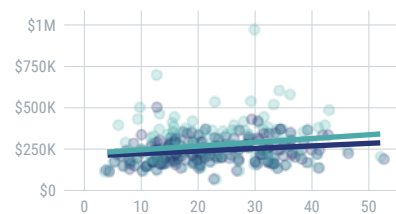
For most roles, there is a distinct positive correlation between experience and both base salary and total cash compensation. The trend lines, particularly for total cash compensation, show a steady incline, indicating that accumulated experience is directly rewarded with higher pay. This is especially evident for roles like Attorney, Senior Attorney, and Associate General Counsel, where the compensation lines show a clear and continuous rise with each additional year of experience.

The consistency of this relationship is a key takeaway. Regardless of the specific job title, the general principle holds: more experience typically means more pay. This suggests a structured career progression within in-house legal departments where expertise built over time is financially recognized.

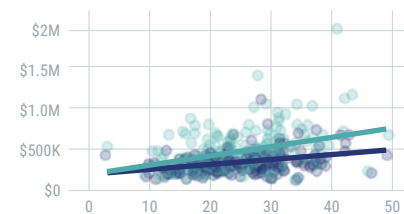
However, while the upward trend is consistent, the rate at which compensation increases with experience differs. For instance, the slope of the compensation lines for CLOs appears steeper than for an Attorney, indicating that compensation grows more rapidly with experience at the executive level. This is likely due to the increasing complexity, responsibility, and strategic importance that comes with senior leadership roles.

### BASED SALARY AND TOTAL CASH COMPENSATION BASED ON EXPERIENCE

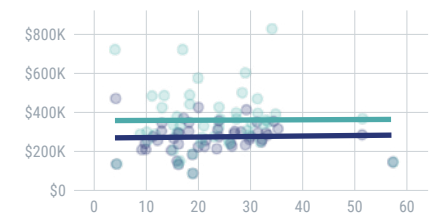
General Counsel - Single Lawyer



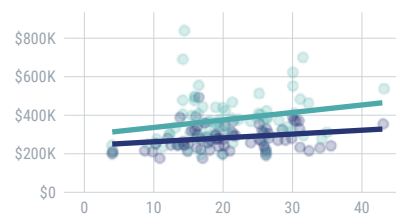
General Counsel/Chief Legal Officer



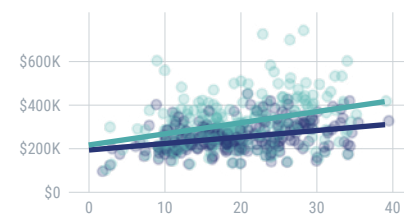
General Counsel - Division/Subsidiary



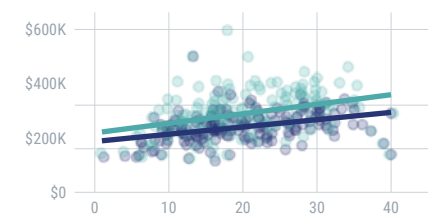
Deputy General Counsel



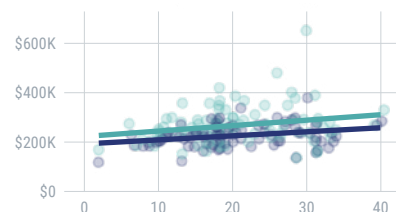
Associate General Counsel



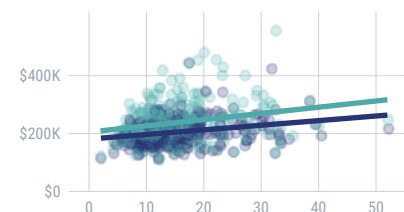
Managing Attorney



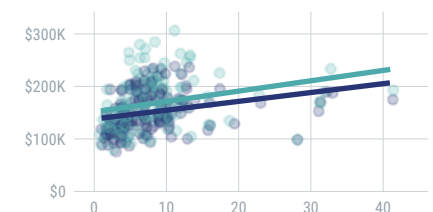
Expert Attorney



Senior Attorney



Attorney



— Base Salary — Total Cash Compensation

## PREVIOUS LAW FIRM EXPERIENCE

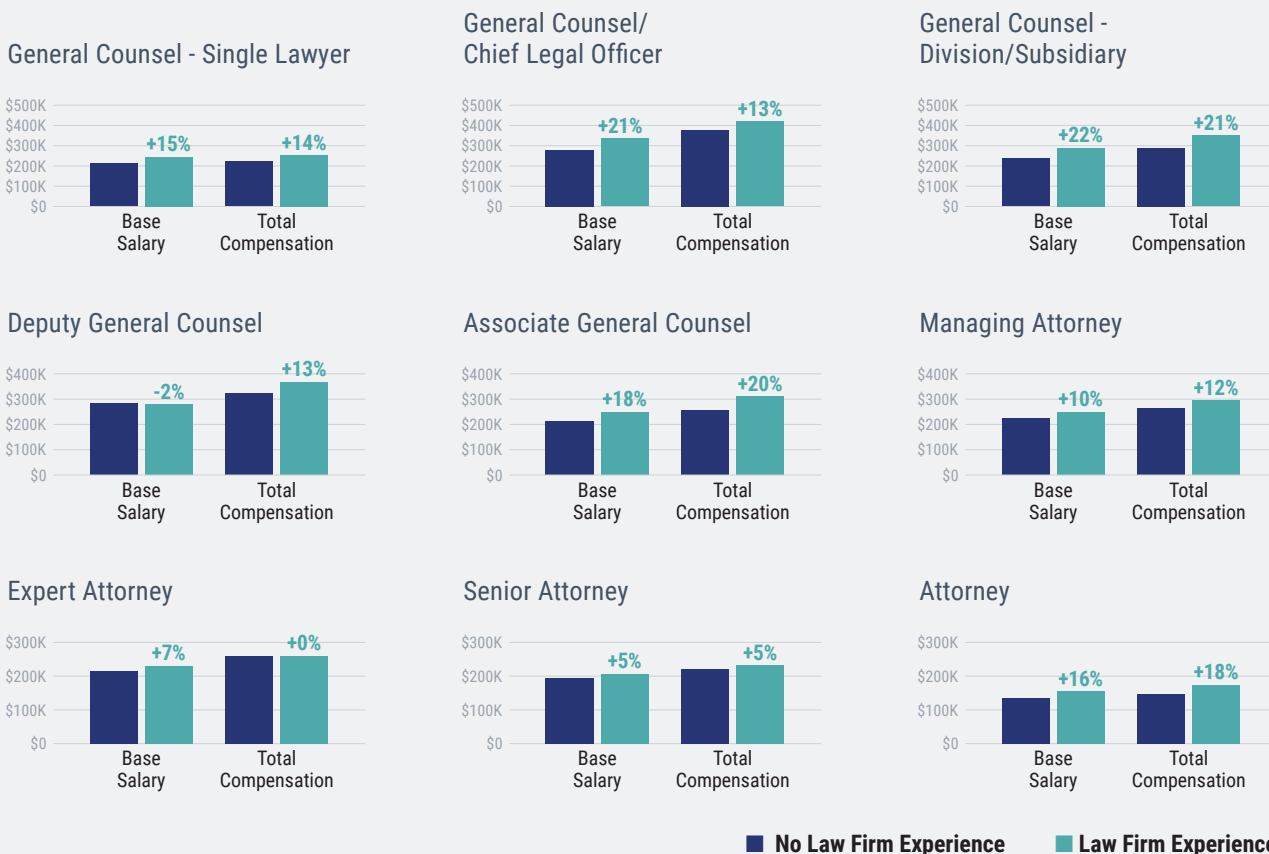
The data suggests that for most roles, having prior law firm experience correlates with higher base salaries and, more significantly, increased total cash compensation. The most substantial advantages appear at the entry and senior levels. An Attorney with prior law firm experience earns a median base salary 16 percent higher and total cash compensation 18 percent higher than those without such experience. This trend extends to Senior Attorneys, who see a five percent increase in both base salary and total cash compensation. This indicates that the foundational training and diverse experience gained at a law firm are often valued and rewarded early in an in-house career.

The benefit of law firm experience also extends to the leadership positions of the legal department. For CLOs, prior firm experience is associated with a 21 percent higher base salary and 13 percent higher total cash compensation. Similarly, GCs in a single-lawyer environment also see a substantial 15 percent increase in base salary and a 14 percent increase in total cash compensation.

While the overall trend points to a positive correlation, there are nuances. For Deputy General Counsel, a slight decrease of two percentage points in median base salary is observed for those with law firm experience, though their total cash compensation is still 13 percent higher. Expert Attorneys with law firm experience see a 7 percent higher base salary, but virtually no difference in total cash compensation, suggesting that for highly specialized roles, specific industry expertise might outweigh the general law firm's background in terms of overall pay.

Previous law firm experience generally provides a strategic advantage in terms of in-house legal compensation. This is particularly true for early-career professionals and those aspiring to the CLO role, where the comprehensive training and diverse exposure from a firm background translate into higher earning potential, especially in total cash compensation.

### BASED SALARY AND TOTAL CASH COMPENSATION BASED ON LAW FIRM EXPERIENCE

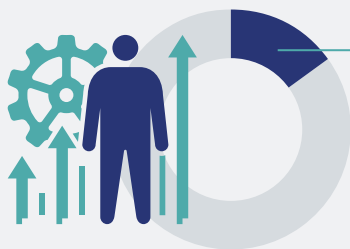
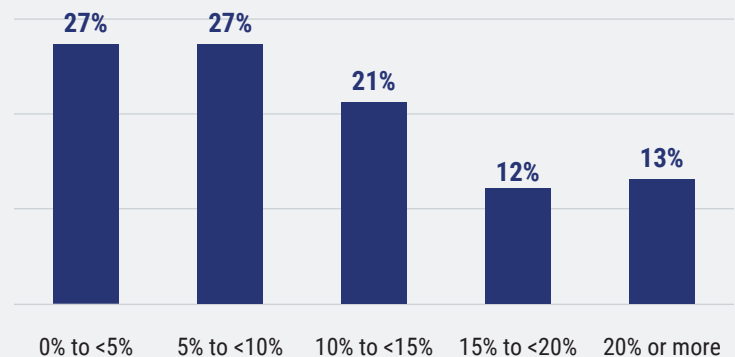


# Promotions & Merit Increases

## PROMOTIONS

Among legal professionals that received a promotion last year, a majority received modest increases of under 10 percent of their base salary. Approximately 27 percent of respondents who received a promotion saw their base salary increase by less than five percent, with another 27 percent experiencing a five percent to less than 10 percent raise. While less frequent, more significant increases also occur: 21 percent received a 10 percent to less than 15 percent raise, and a combined 25 percent of respondents saw their base salary jump by 15 percent or more as a result of a promotion, including 13 percent who achieved a 20 percent or greater increase.

### BASE SALARY PERCENTAGE INCREASE RECEIVED



15% of respondents in the General Counsel/Chief Legal Officer role reported having received a promotion last year.

Overall, 17 percent of survey respondents received a promotion. When examining promotion rates by work arrangement, subtle differences emerge. In-house professionals working on a hybrid schedule (the majority) appear to have a slight edge, with 18 percent reporting a promotion, marginally higher than the 17 percent for those working full-time in the office. In contrast, fully remote employees saw the lowest promotion rate at 14 percent. This suggests that while both in-office and hybrid models seem to offer comparable opportunities for advancement, a fully remote setup might present a slight disadvantage in terms of promotion potential, possibly due to reduced visibility or networking opportunities.

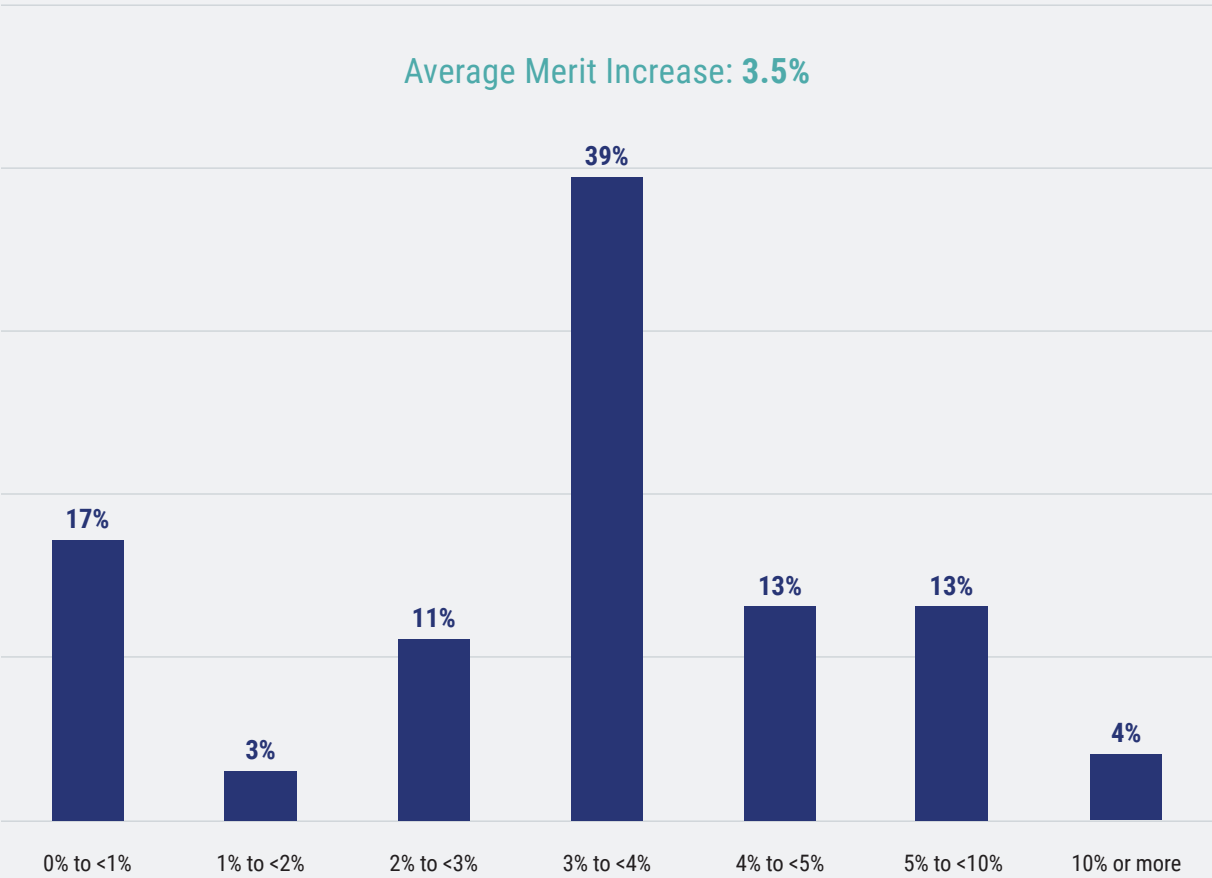
## PERCENTAGE OF PARTICIPANTS PROMOTED BASED ON WORK ARRANGEMENT



# MERIT INCREASES

Merit increases for in-house legal professionals largely clustered around the observed average of 3.5 percent. The most common base salary merit increase, experienced by 39 percent of respondents, fell within the three percent to four percent range. Another significant portion (17 percent) received a very modest increase of less than one percent, including those who did not receive an increase last year. While 13 percent saw a four percent to five percent bump, and another 13 percent received five percent to less than 10 percent, only a small fraction of participants (four percent) enjoyed increases of 10 percent or more based on merit.

## MERIT INCREASE PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION





# Policies & Practices

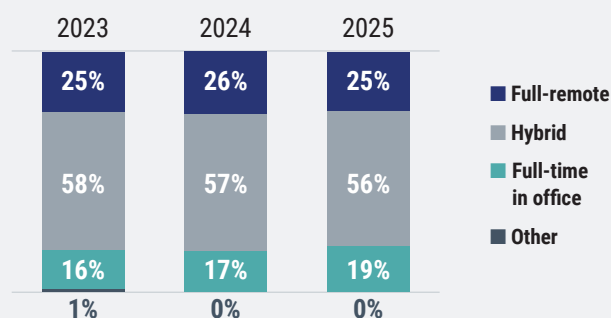
## WORK POLICIES & ARRANGEMENTS

The distribution of work arrangements for in-house legal professionals from 2023 to 2025 illustrates a continued post-pandemic evolution. Hybrid models consistently remain the dominant work arrangement, accounting for over half of professionals (58 percent in 2023, 56 percent in 2025). Concurrently, full-time in-office presence has seen a slight but steady increase, rising from 16 percent in 2023 to 19 percent in 2025. The proportion of fully remote roles has remained relatively stable, hovering around 25-26 percent. The trend suggests a nuanced adaptation, with legal departments largely embracing hybrid flexibility while gradually re-emphasizing a degree of in-person collaboration.

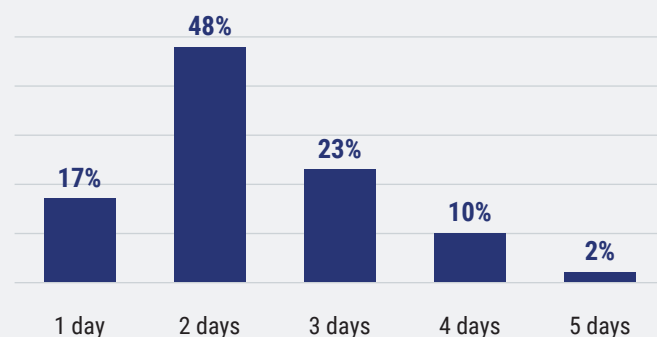
For participants on a hybrid work schedule, two and three days of remote work per week are by far the most common arrangements. Nearly half of in-house legal professionals working a hybrid schedule (48 percent) work two days remotely, while 23 percent work remotely for three days. This indicates that the majority of hybrid schedules involve spending two or three days in the office and the rest working from home. A smaller percentage (17 percent) work remotely only one day a week, and 10 percent work four days remotely. A very small share of respondents (two percent) indicated that they work remotely five days a week, which likely relates to hybrid, yet highly flexible arrangements, such as attending the office only for specific meetings or working a different, non-week-based schedule, such as one in-person day every other week or a few in-office days spread over an entire month.

The data reveals a strong preference for hybrid and flexible work arrangements across all current work schedule types. A significant 44 percent of those working full-time in the office desire a change, with an overwhelming 88 percent of them preferring a hybrid model. Even among fully remote professionals, who are generally content (only nine percent want a change), 91 percent of those seeking a new arrangement would opt for hybrid. Notably, 27 percent of current hybrid workers also wish for a different schedule, and 58 percent of these individuals still prefer a hybrid setup, indicating a desire for a modified or optimized hybrid arrangement rather than a return to full-time in-office or full-remote work.

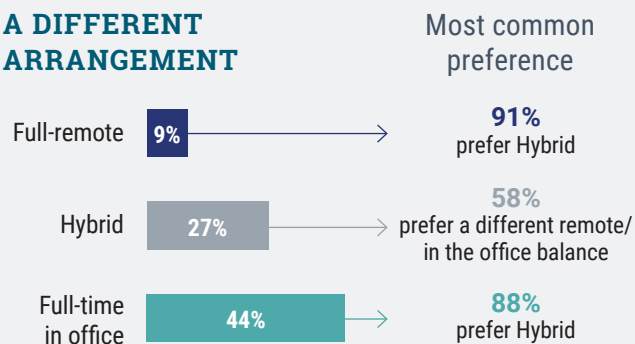
### EVOLUTION OF THE WORK ARRANGEMENTS DISTRIBUTION



### DAYS OF REMOTE WORK IN A WEEK AMONG THOSE WORKING A HYBRID SCHEDULE

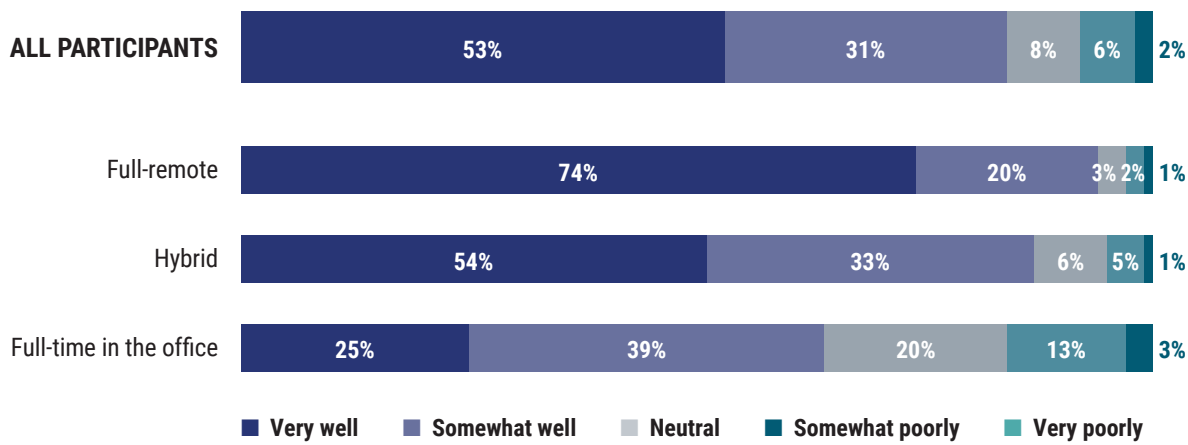


### PERCENTAGE THAT WOULD PREFER A DIFFERENT ARRANGEMENT



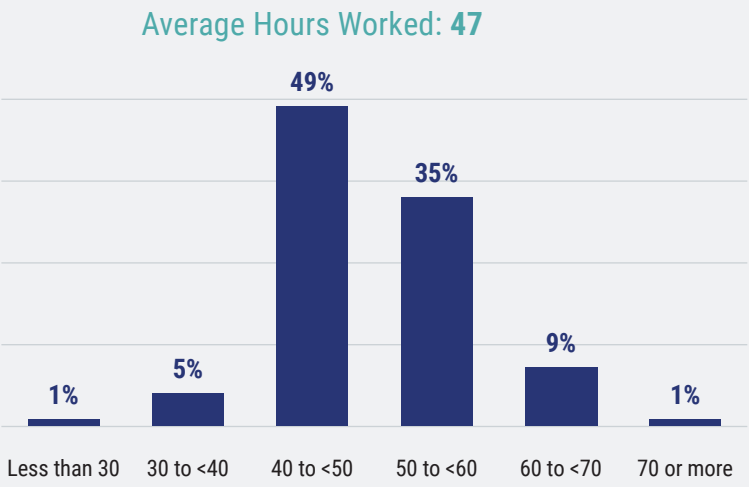
The survey reveals a strong correlation between the participants' work arrangement and how they see it supporting their work-life balance. Overall, 84 percent of in-house legal professionals feel their current setup supports their work-life balance "very well" or "somewhat well." However, this sentiment varies significantly when broken down by work arrangement type. Fully remote workers report the highest satisfaction, with a remarkable 74 percent saying it supports their work-life balance "very well", and 94 percent value it positively overall. Hybrid arrangements also result in positive assessment of work-life balance support, with 54 percent saying "very well" and 87 percent valuing it positively. In stark contrast, only 25 percent of full-time in-office professionals feel their work-life balance is "very well" supported, and a notable 16 percent feel a full-time in office schedule supports work-life balance "somewhat" or "very poorly." The data clearly indicates that work flexibility significantly enhances work-life balance.

HOW CURRENT WORK ARRANGEMENTS SUPPORT WORK-LIFE BALANCE



Survey participants provided an estimate of the average number of hours they work each week, with the data revealing clear concentration around a standard 40-to-50-hour week—nearly half of all respondents (49 percent) work between 40 and less than 50 hours per week. A substantial 35 percent also report working 50 to less than 60 hours, indicating that extended work weeks are fairly common in in-house legal departments. While a small percentage (nine percent) work 60 to less than 70 hours, and only one percent work 70 or more hours, these figures highlight that a significant portion of in-house legal roles demand more than a typical 40-hour commitment. Conversely, very few participants (five percent) work less than 40 hours. The average number of hours worked each week for all participants is 47.

NUMBER OF HOURS WORKED PER WEEK DISTRIBUTION

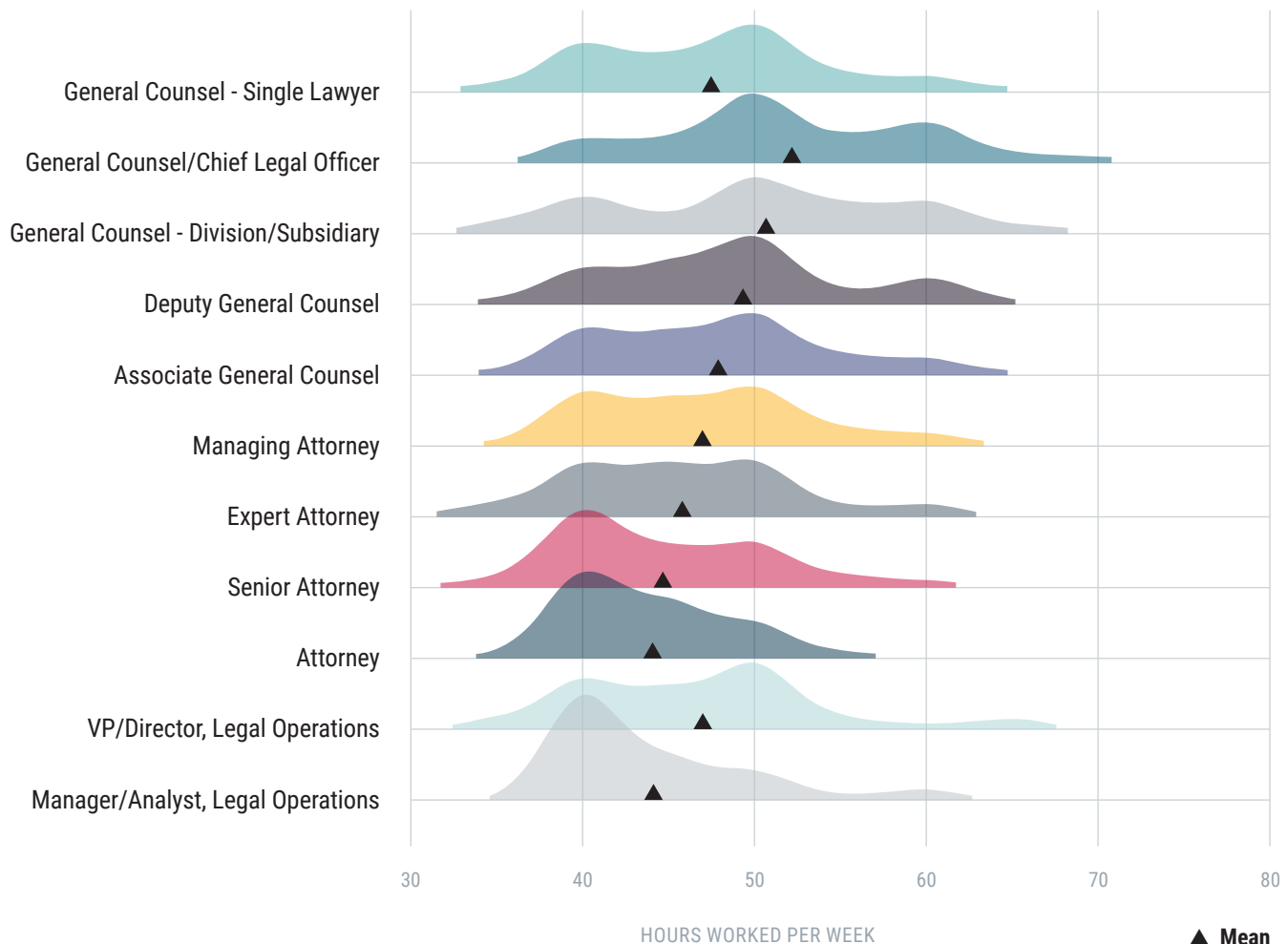


This ridge chart illustrates the distribution of the number of hours worked per week by job title. The mean value for each position is also shown. Most roles, including Deputy General Counsel, Assistant General Counsel, Managing Attorney, and VP/Director, Legal Operations show a peak in the 45-to-55 hours per week range, with their average hours clustering around 47-to-50.

However, higher-level positions like General Counsel - Single Lawyer, and especially CLO, and General Counsel - Division/Subsidiary tend to have broader distributions, extending further into the 55-to-65 hours per week range and beyond, resulting in generally higher averages, exceeding 50 for CLOs (and also for GC at the subsidiary level). This indicates that increased seniority often correlates with longer work weeks.

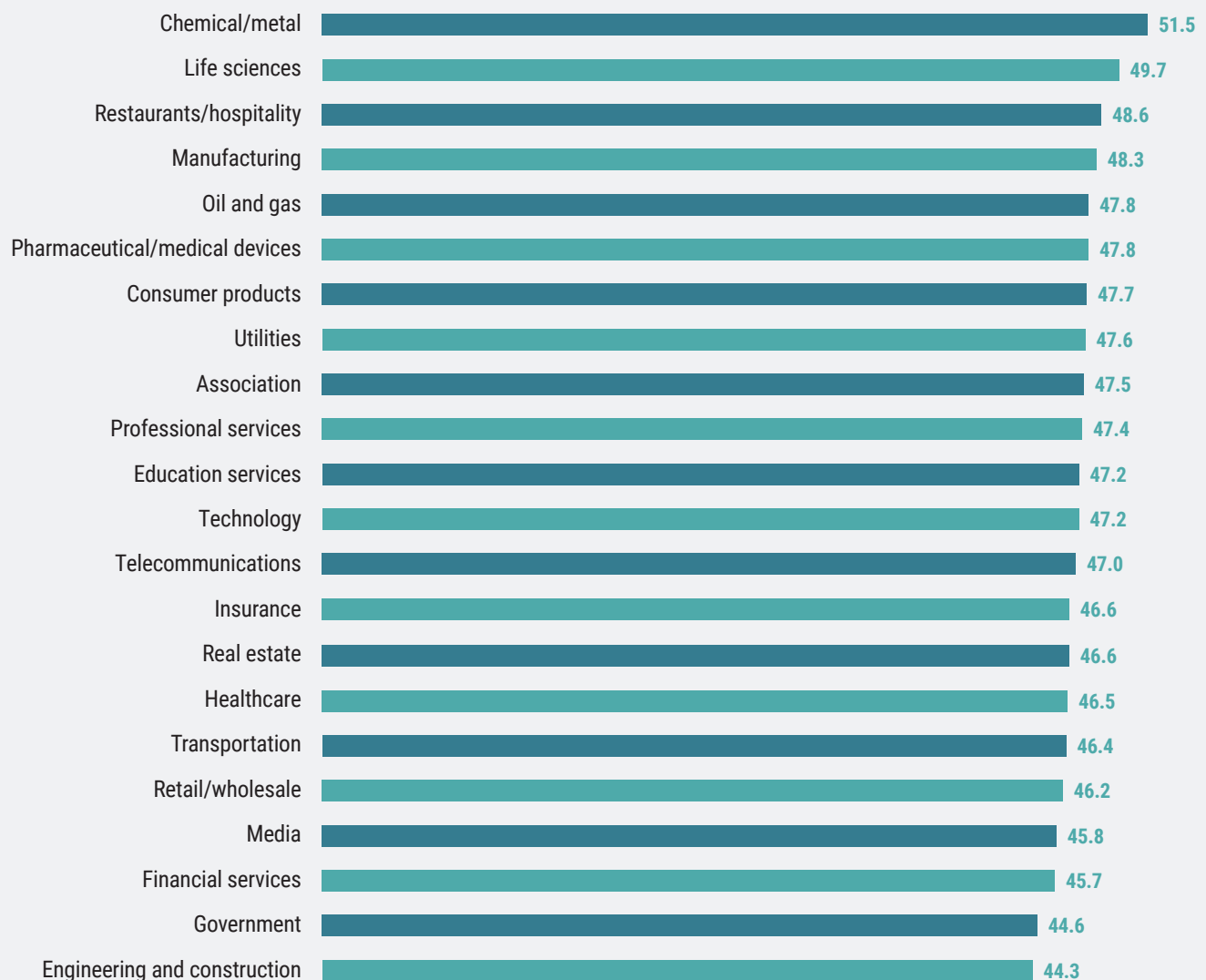
Conversely, roles like Manager/Analyst, Legal Operations show a tighter distribution, with a mean closer to 45 hours, suggesting a more consistent and possibly lower average work commitment compared to leadership roles. Similarly, participants in the entry-level Attorney role also report a higher concentration around the 40-hour week mark, with an average close to 45. The data highlights that while a 40-to-50-hour week is common, seniority often brings an expectation of working longer hours.

## NUMBER OF HOURS WORKED PER WEEK BY JOB TITLE



Legal department staff work varying hours depending on their industry. In-house legal professionals in the chemical/metal industries report the longest average work week at 51.5 hours, followed by life sciences at 49.7 hours. This suggests that highly regulated or complex industries may demand more time from their legal teams. Conversely, engineering and construction (44.3 hours) and government (44.6 hours) report the shortest average work weeks. The majority of industries cluster around the 46-to-48-hour mark, centered around the overall mean (47 hours), indicating that while some sectors require extended commitments, a typical work week for in-house legal professionals generally falls within this range.

### AVERAGE NUMBER OF HOURS WORKED PER WEEK BY INDUSTRY

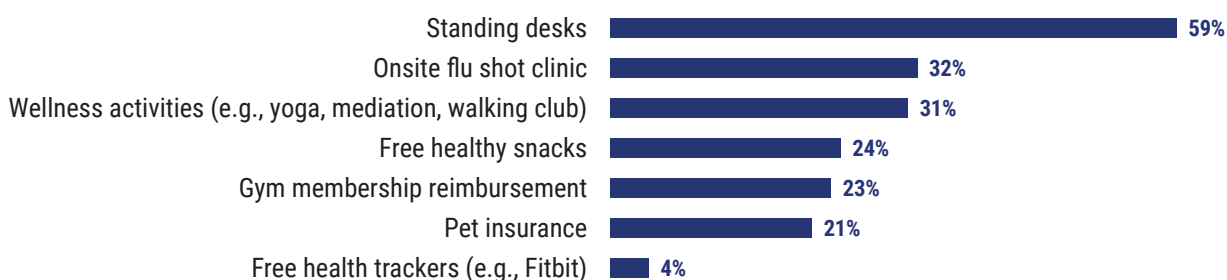


## PERKS

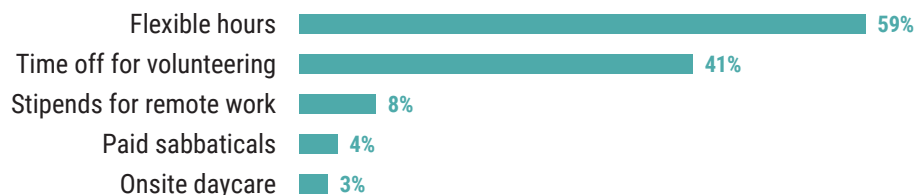
Legal department professionals tend to receive professional development perks, with 80 percent enjoying paid memberships to professional organizations and 55 percent also receive sponsored travel to industry conferences. Health and wellness benefits like standing desks (59 percent) and flexible hours (59 percent) are also common. Time off for volunteering is enjoyed by 41 percent. In contrast, financial and lifestyle support, such as housing contributions and transportation allowances, are significantly less common, indicating a stronger focus on growth-oriented and flexibility-driven benefits.

### PERCENTAGE THAT RECEIVES EACH OF THE FOLLOWING PERKS

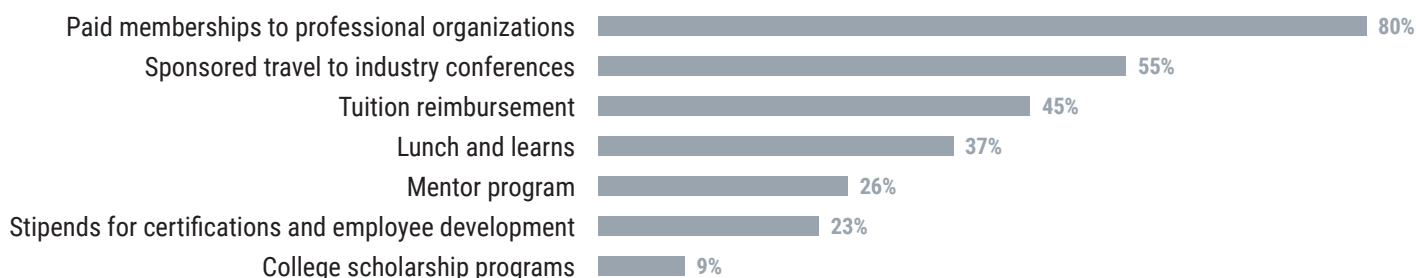
#### Health and Wellness



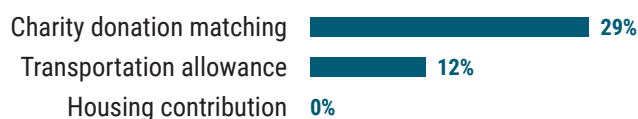
#### Work-Life Flexibility



#### Professional Development



#### Financial and Lifestyle Support





## PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE

Most participating in-house counsel (77 percent) previously worked at a law firm before transitioning to working in-house. This indicates that traditional law firm experience is a dominant pathway into in-house legal departments. A smaller but notable segment (16 percent) went directly in-house after law school, suggesting a direct entry route for some. Additionally, 15 percent had prior experience in government roles. Less common previous work experience includes working in a different department or function within the same enterprise (four percent) or other varied backgrounds (five percent). It is worth noting, however, that the sample of attorneys is drawn largely from larger organizations, which are more likely to require prior law firm experience, a factor which may influence this finding.



**77%**  
**LAW FIRM**

**16%**

Went directly in-house  
after law school

**15%**

Government

**4%**

Different department or  
function in the enterprise

**5%**

Other

# Job Satisfaction

## OVERALL JOB SATISFACTION

A significant majority of in-house legal professionals express satisfaction with their jobs, with 38 percent reporting being "very satisfied" and an additional 45 percent "somewhat satisfied," totaling over 82 percent with a positive sentiment toward their current jobs. Only a small fraction, two percent, are "very dissatisfied," and six percent are "somewhat dissatisfied." The remaining nine percent remain "neutral." These figures suggest a generally high level of job satisfaction within the in-house legal sector, with most professionals finding their roles fulfilling.



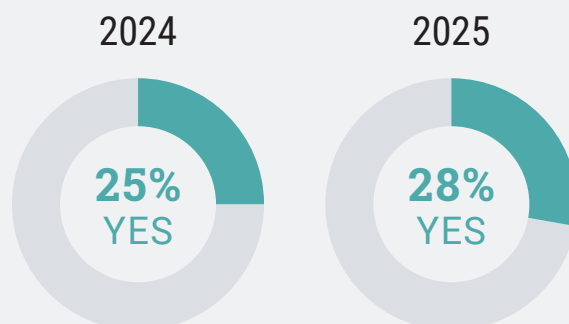
## WORKLOAD CHANGE IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS

In-house legal professionals largely report an increase in their workload over the past 12 months. A substantial 28 percent experienced a "significantly increased" workload, while 39 percent noted it "somewhat increased," totaling about two-thirds of participating in-house counsel and legal operations professionals experiencing an uptick. Conversely, 29 percent stated their workload "stayed relatively the same." Only a small minority reported a decrease, with four percent seeing a "somewhat decreased" workload and a mere one percent experiencing a "significantly decreased" workload. These figures suggest a prevailing trend in growing demands among in-house legal teams.



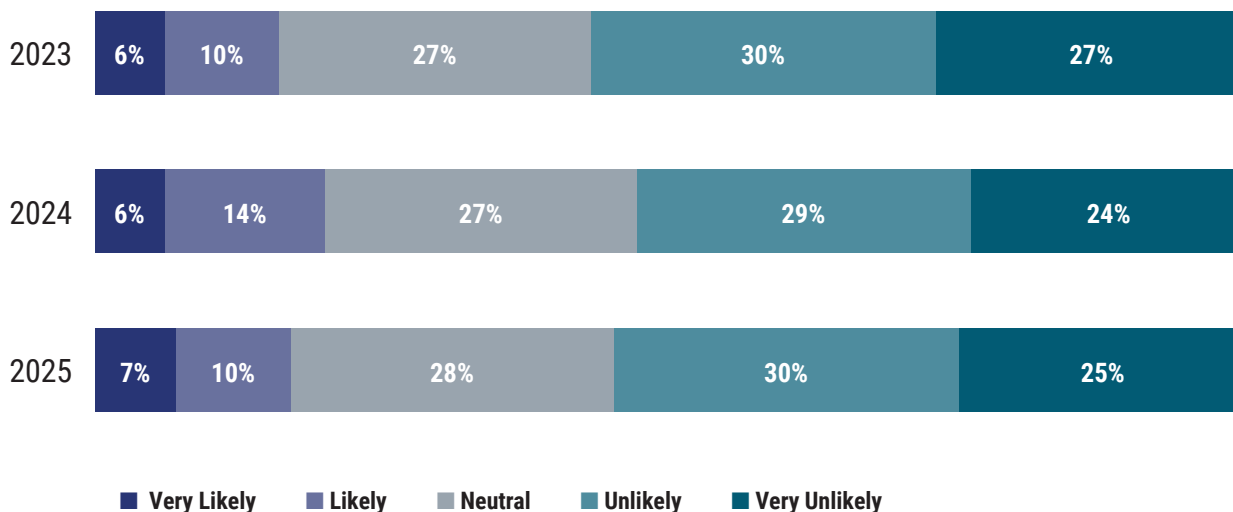
## RECENT JOB CHANGES

The survey results show a slight increase in job mobility for in-house legal professionals between 2024 and 2025. In 2024, 75 percent of respondents reported not changing jobs in the last two years, meaning that one-in-four participants had made a move. By 2025, the percentage of those who changed jobs increased to 28 percent. This suggests a modest but observable trend towards greater job movement.



## LIKELIHOOD TO CHANGE JOBS IN THE NEXT YEAR

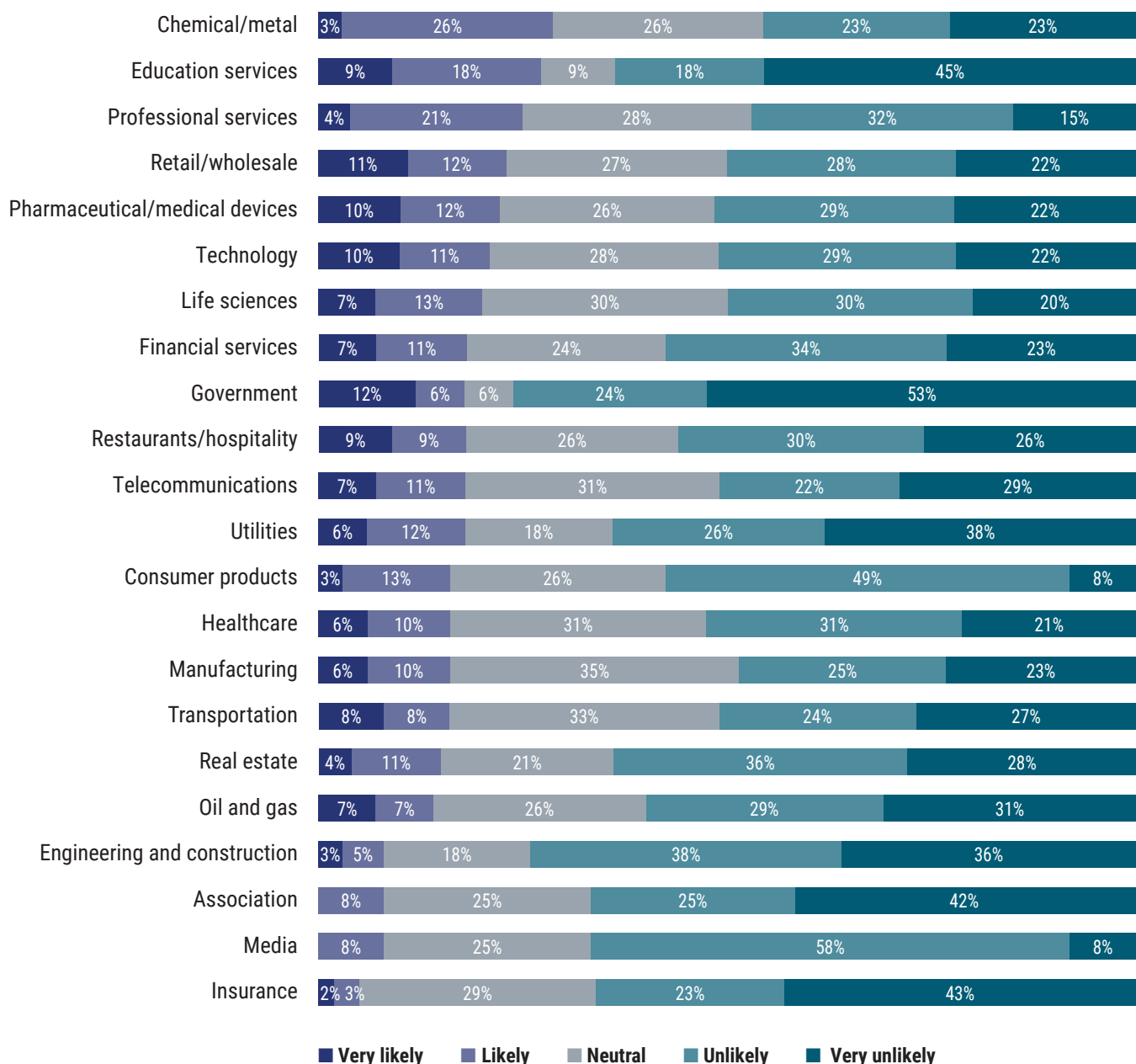
The likelihood of in-house legal professionals expecting to change jobs in the next year reveals a consistent pattern of stability, despite the slight uptick observed in actual recent job changes discussed above. The combined percentage of those "unlikely" or "very unlikely" to change jobs has remained high and relatively stable, only decreasing slightly from 57 percent in 2023 to 55 percent in 2025. The "very likely" category saw a modest increase from six percent in 2023 and 2024 to seven percent in 2025, though the "likely" category experienced a mild increase in 2024 (14 percent) before returning to 10 percent in 2025, aligning with 2023 levels. The results suggest that while a small segment might be more inclined to move, most in-house professionals generally anticipate staying in their current roles, even as a slightly higher percentage of survey participants reported having changed jobs in the two previous years.



While the overall likelihood of changing jobs remains relatively low, this varies significantly by industry. When combining the "very likely" and "likely" categories, higher anticipated mobility is observed in sectors such as chemical/metal (29 percent), education services (27 percent), and professional services (25 percent). These industries may present more dynamic environments, frequent opportunities, or specialized demands that encourage greater talent movement, aligning with the slight overall uptick in job changes.

Conversely, lower anticipated mobility is evident in industries like insurance (only five percent when combining very likely and likely), engineering and construction (eight percent), associations (eight percent), and media (eight percent). These sectors may offer more stable career paths, a perceived sense of security, or less frequent external drivers for change, contributing to higher retention rates among their in-house legal teams.

### LIKELIHOOD TO CHANGE JOBS IN THE NEXT YEAR BY INDUSTRY



## STRESS AND BURN OUT

The majority of in-house legal professionals experience moderate levels of stress, with 44 percent reporting "regular demands that require careful balancing." An additional 29 percent describe their stress as "mild," indicating occasional but sustainable pressure. However, a significant number, 18 percent, face "high stress" that impacts their performance, and four percent are experiencing "severe stress" or burnout, leading them to consider a career change. These two categories combined add up to 22 percent, or more than one-in-five in-house counsel and legal operations professionals reporting high or severe levels of stress on the job. On the other hand, only a small minority, five percent, report no stress at all. These figures underscore that while some stress is common, a notable segment of in-house counsel is struggling with significant workload pressures.



### 4% SEVERE STRESS

I'm experiencing burnout and have considered a career change

### 18% HIGH STRESS

Impacts my ability to perform at my best

### 44% MODERATE STRESS

Regular demands that require careful balancing

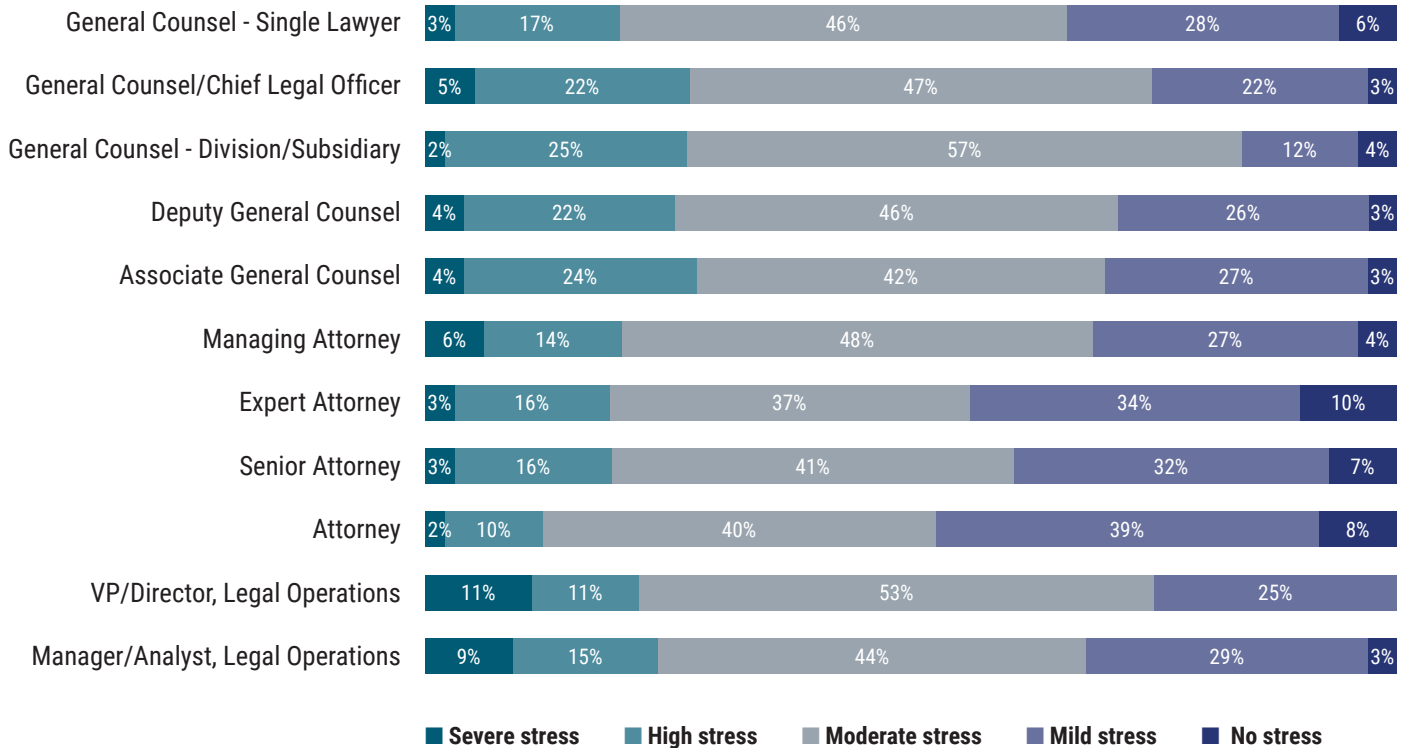
### 29% MILD STRESS

Occasional pressure, but sustainable

### 5% NO STRESS

My workload is fully manageable

## LEVEL OF STRESS BY JOB TITLE



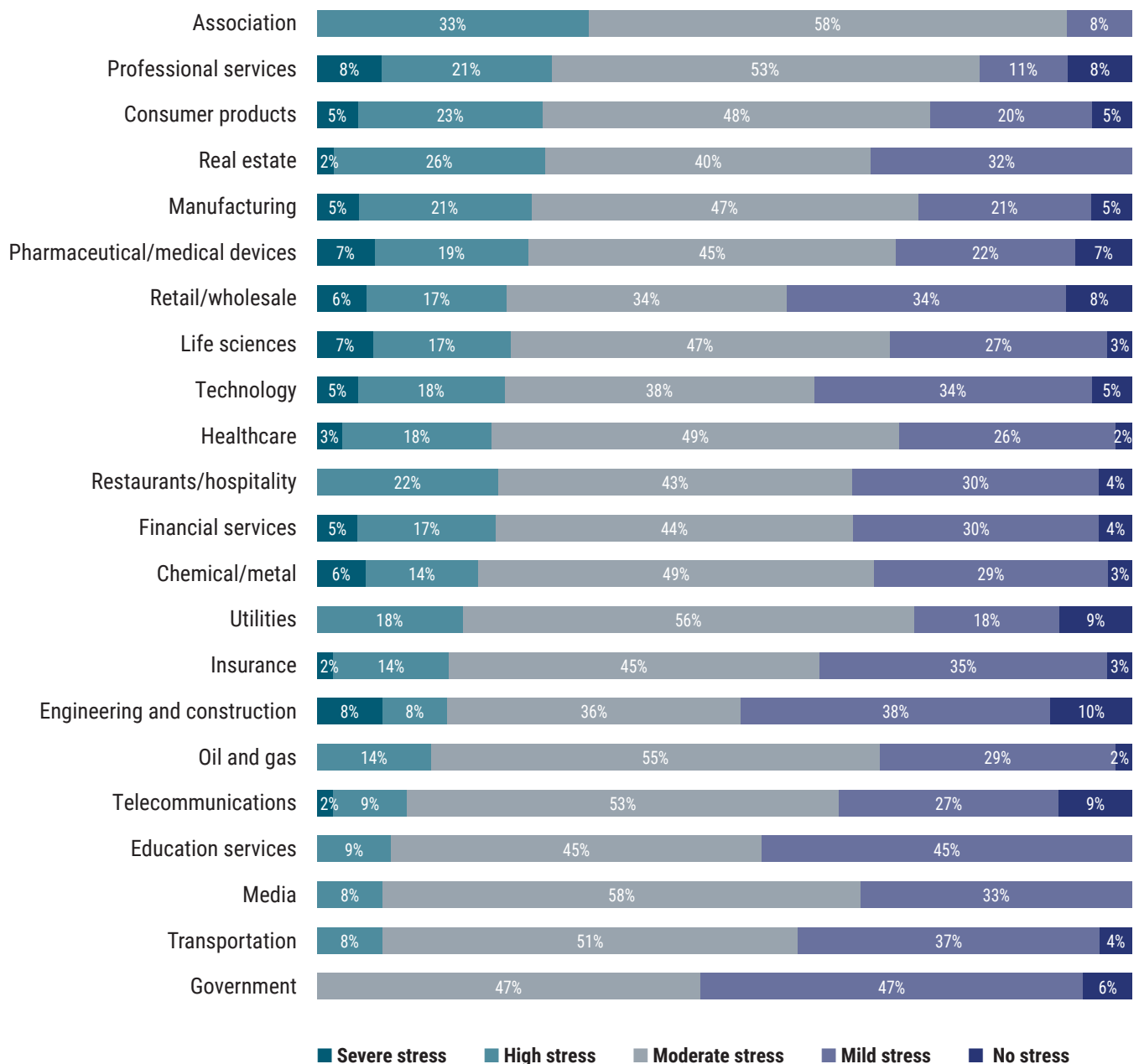
Analyzing stress levels by job title reveals interesting trends. CLOs, General Counsel - Division/Subsidiary, Deputy General Counsel, and Associate General Counsel consistently show a higher combined percentage of "high stress" and "severe stress," often exceeding 25 percent. This suggests that leadership positions bear a greater burden of intense demands. Notably, legal operations leaders in the VP/Director, Legal Operations role also stand out with a significant 22 percent combined in these two stress categories, indicating high pressure in operational leadership. In contrast, "Attorney" roles report the lowest combined high/severe stress at 12 percent, while "Expert Attorney" and "Senior Attorney" also show relatively lower percentages, suggesting that individual contributor roles might experience less acute stress compared to management.



Analyzing stress levels by industry also reveals notable variations in the prevalence of high and severe stress. Industries showing the highest combined percentages in these categories include associations (33 percent), professional services (29 percent), and consumer products (28 percent). This elevated stress may stem from intense client demands, rapid market changes, regulatory complexities, or high-stakes transactions inherent to these sectors.

Conversely, government (zero percent), transportation (eight percent), and media (eight percent) report the lowest combined levels of high and severe stress. This could be attributed to more stable work environments, potentially less aggressive external pressures, or more predictable legal frameworks compared to other industries, contributing to a more manageable workload for in-house counsel.

### LEVEL OF STRESS BY INDUSTRY

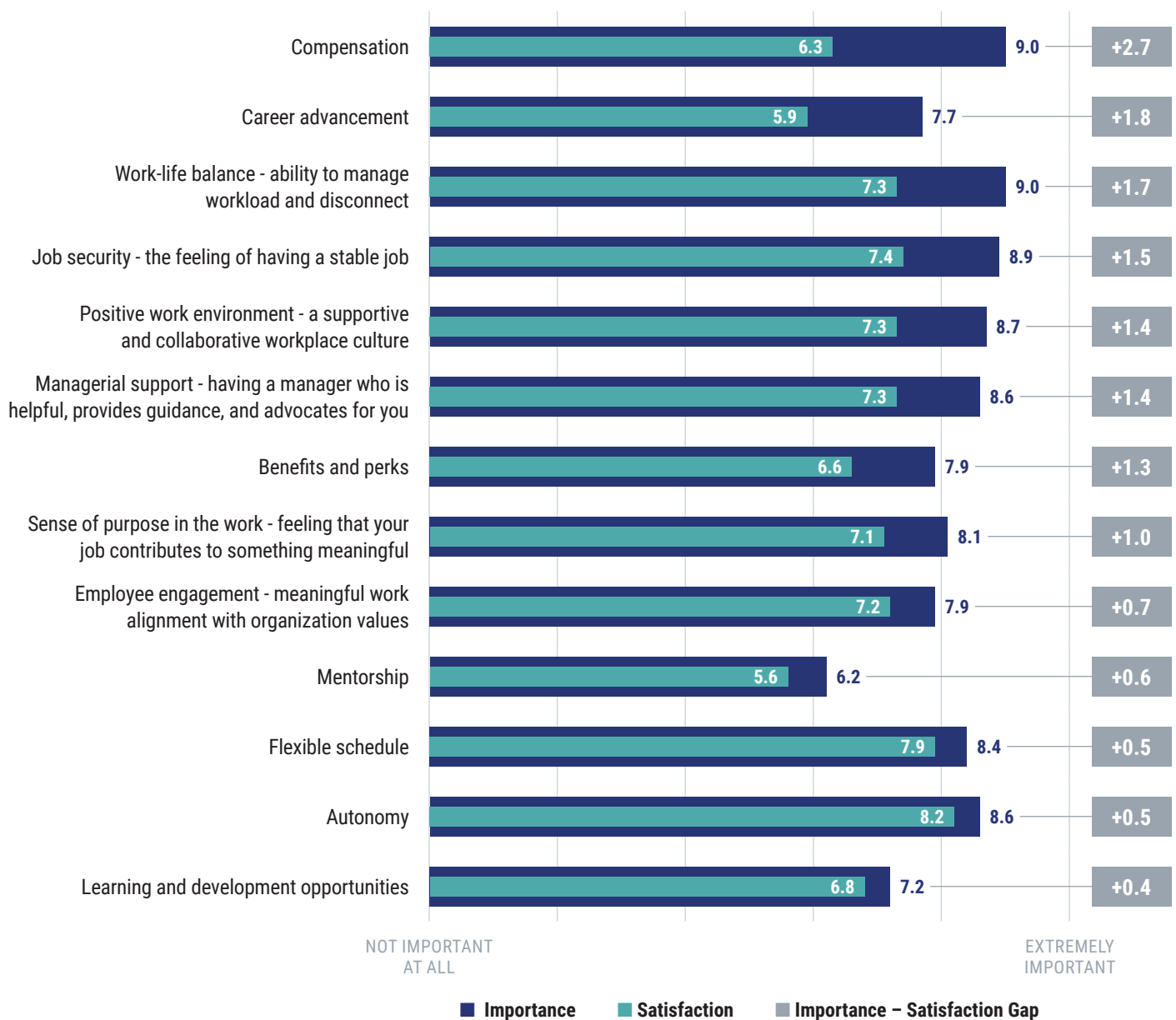


## IMPORTANCE AND SATISFACTION OF JOB ATTRIBUTES

All respondents were asked to review 13 different attributes of their current job (e.g., career advancement opportunities, work-life balance, job security, etc.) and rate them on a 0 to 10 scale in terms of their importance as well as how satisfied they are with each of these attributes in their current role. We then calculated the average ratings for each attribute as well as the gap between each average rating.

Respondents prioritize compensation most highly, rating it an average of 9.0 on the importance scale. Despite its importance, compensation also has the largest importance-satisfaction gap (2.7), which suggests that professionals' satisfaction with their pay often falls short of its perceived importance. Career advancement also shows a notable gap (1.8), indicating a strong desire for more opportunities for professional growth. While work-life balance is rated as equally important as compensation (9.0), it has a smaller gap (1.7), which implies that respondents are relatively more satisfied with their work-life balance than with their compensation or career advancement.

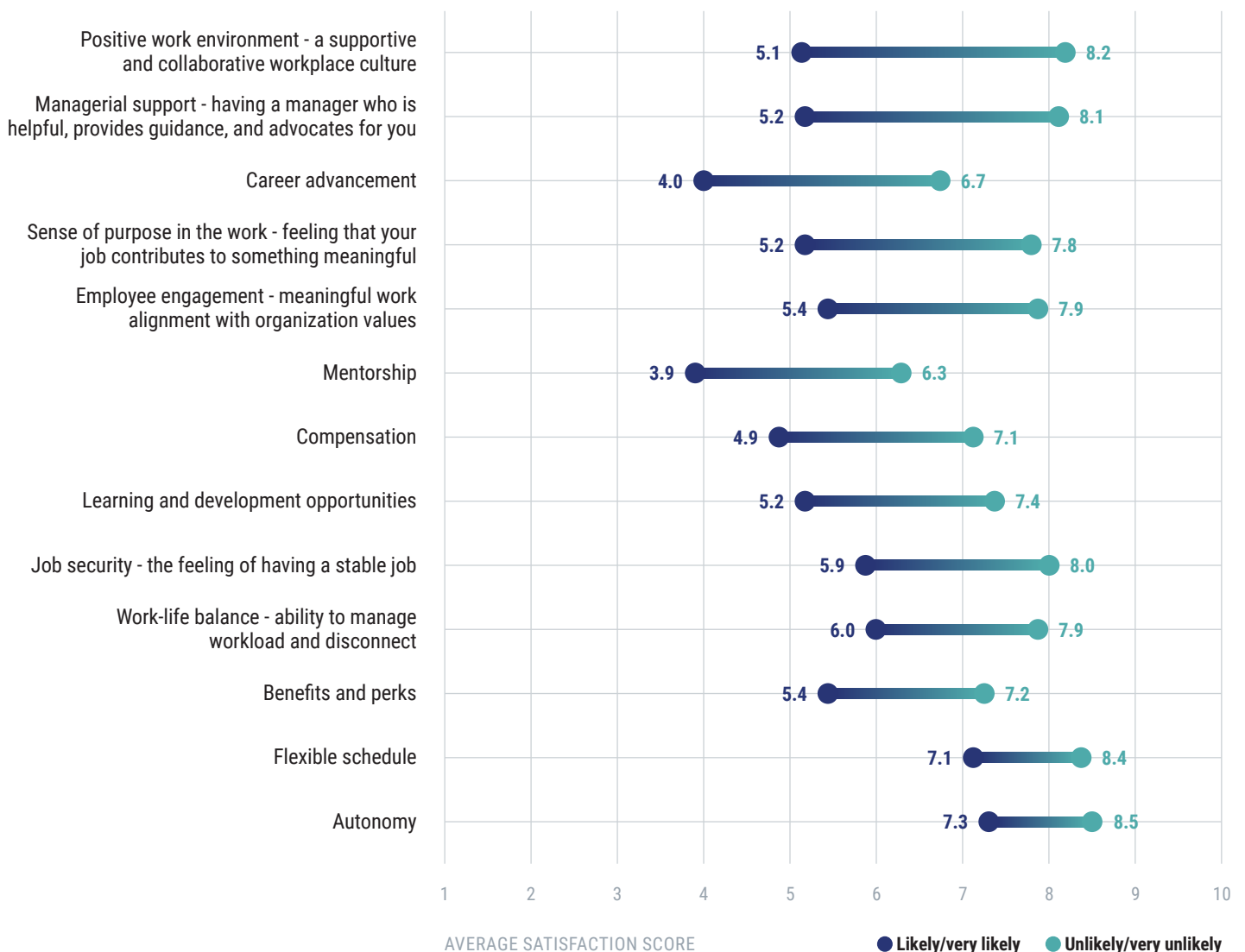
### GAP ANALYSIS OF IMPORTANCE AND SATISFACTION WITH KEY JOB ATTRIBUTES



The data also reveals critical differences in job attribute satisfaction between in-house professionals likely to stay at their jobs and those likely to leave. The largest gaps in satisfaction average scores between groups are seen in a positive work environment (3.1), managerial support (2.9), and career advancement (2.7). This indicates that dissatisfaction with workplace culture, leadership, and growth opportunities are major drivers for those considering a job change.

While compensation is important, its satisfaction gap (2.2) is smaller than these non-monetary factors, suggesting that a lack of support, purpose, or a positive environment is a stronger predictor of mobility than compensation alone. Conversely, autonomy (1.2) and flexible schedule (1.3) show the smallest gaps, implying these are areas where satisfaction is more consistent across both groups, or less influential in the decision to seek new employment.

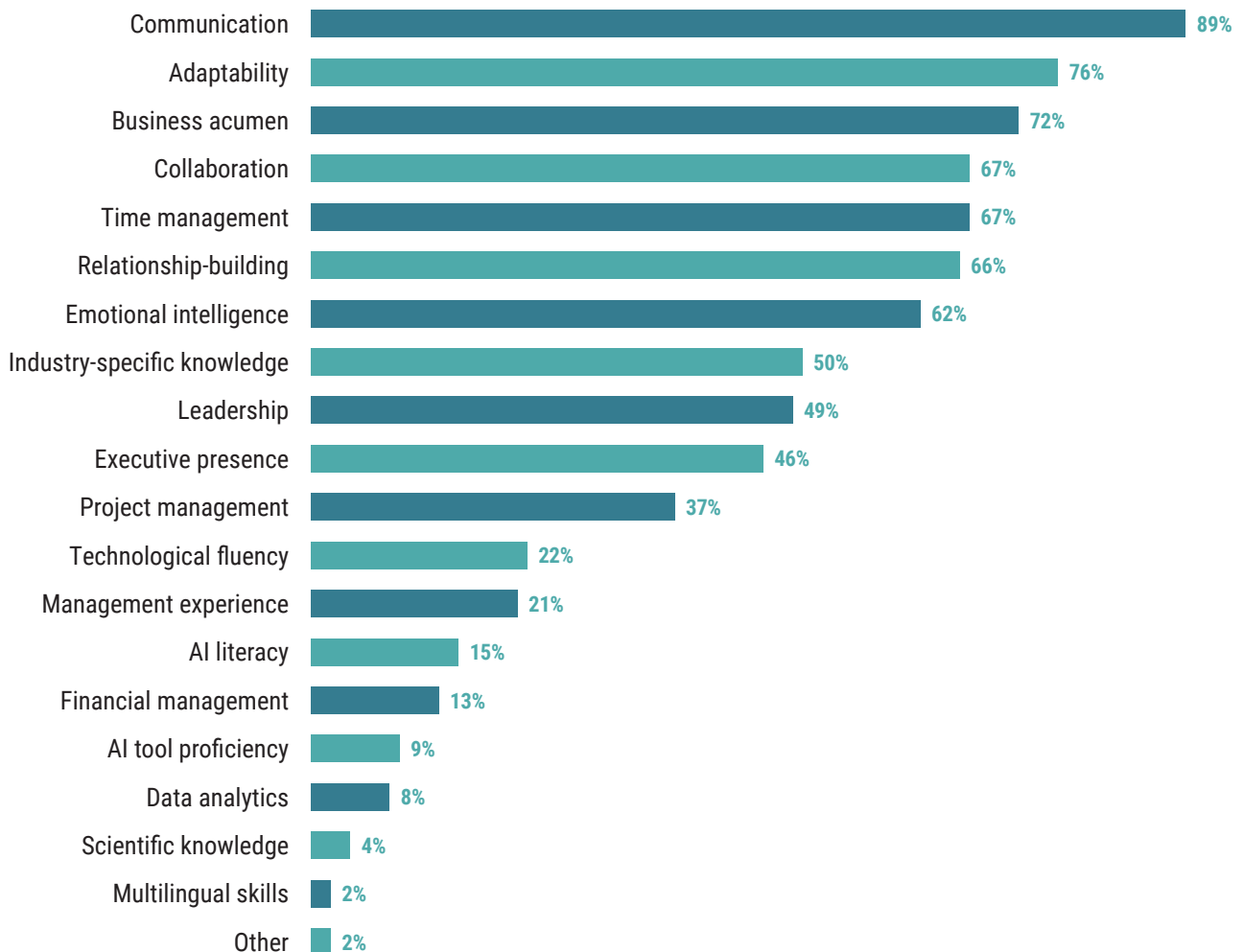
### SATISFACTION WITH KEY JOB ATTRIBUTES BY LIKELIHOOD TO CHANGE JOBS



## NON-LEGAL SKILLS

In-house legal professionals overwhelmingly identify communication (89 percent) as the most critical non-legal skill to be successful in the job, highlighting its importance in conveying complex legal concepts clearly to non-legal colleagues and stakeholders. Adaptability (76 percent), business acumen (72 percent), and collaboration (67 percent) also rank highly. These skills are crucial for in-house counsel to effectively integrate with business units, navigate evolving corporate landscapes, and work seamlessly across departments. In-house lawyers are deeply embedded in the business, making these interpersonal and strategic skills essential for providing practical, actionable advice and contributing to overall organizational success beyond just legal compliance.

### MOST IMPORTANT NON-LEGAL SKILLS TO SUCCEED IN THE JOB

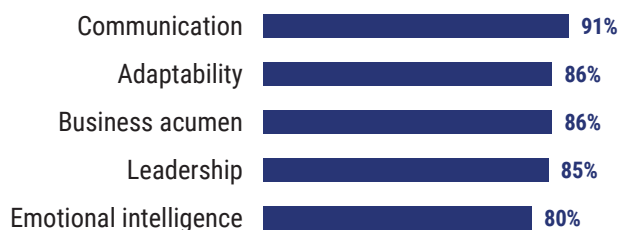


## MOST IMPORTANT NON-LEGAL SKILLS BY JOB TITLE

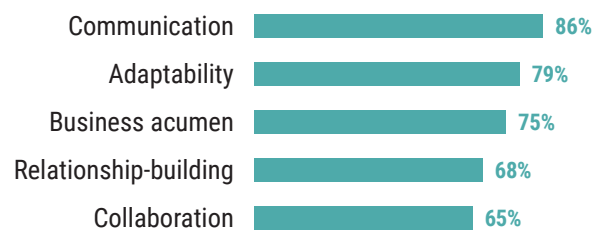
Communication skills are the most valued non-legal skills across all job titles, with percentages ranging from 85 percent to 94 percent. Adaptability and business acumen also remain highly critical across the board, underscoring their universal importance in navigating the corporate legal landscape.

However, distinct trends emerge based on seniority and role. For CLOs, leadership (85 percent) and emotional intelligence (80 percent) are crucial, reflecting their strategic and people-management responsibilities. Positions such as Associate General Counsel, Senior Attorneys, and Attorneys, emphasize relationship-building and time management, highlighting the need for effective internal stakeholder engagement and efficient execution of tasks. Legal Operations Professionals uniquely prioritize project management (79 percent) and collaboration (81 percent), which are central to their role in streamlining legal processes and working cross-functionally. These differences underscore how the specific demands of each role shape the most valued non-legal competencies to prepare incumbents for success.

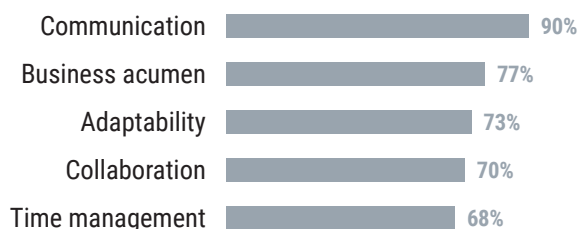
### General Counsel/ Chief Legal Officer



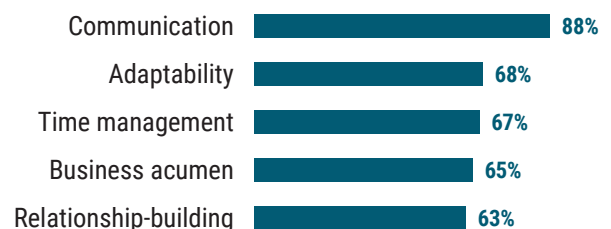
### Associate General Counsel



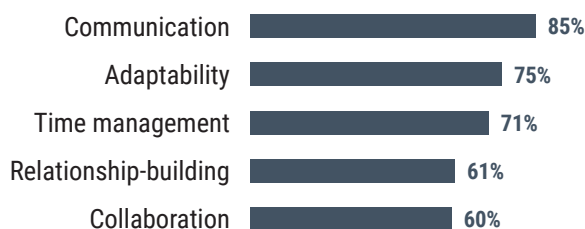
### Managing Attorney



### Senior Attorney



### Attorney



### Legal Operations Professionals

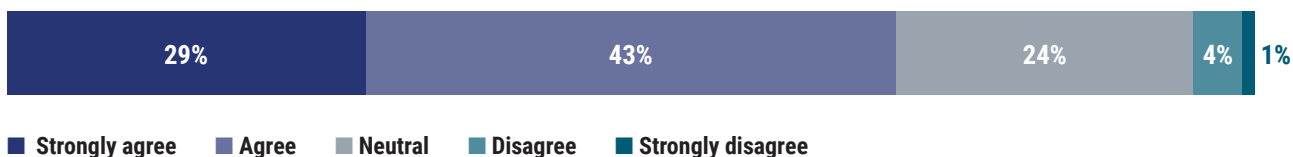


## AI PROFICIENCY

A significant majority of in-house legal professionals believe that proficiency in AI will offer a substantial competitive advantage in the job market over the next 3-to-5 years. A combined 72 percent either "strongly agree" (29 percent) or "agree" (43 percent) with this statement. This widespread consensus underscores a clear recognition within the profession that AI skills are rapidly becoming essential for career progression and market relevance. Only a small minority (five percent) disagree, while 24 percent remain neutral, indicating that the vast majority see AI as a crucial future differentiator for in-house legal roles.

### PERCEPTION ON AI-PROFICIENT LAWYERS HAVING A COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

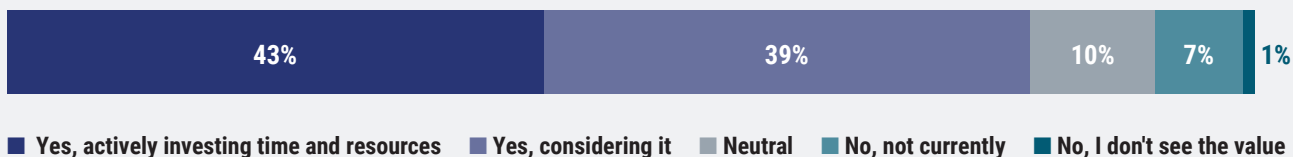
*Do you believe that in-house lawyers who are proficient in AI will have a significant competitive advantage in the job market in the next 3-5 years?*



A substantial majority of in-house legal professionals are actively engaging with or considering improving their AI proficiency. A combined 82 percent are either "actively investing time and resources" (43 percent) or "considering it" (39 percent). This strong proactive stance aligns with the widespread belief that AI skills will be a significant competitive advantage in the coming years. Only a small fraction (one percent) dismisses the value of AI, while seven percent are not currently seeking improvement in AI skills, and 10 percent remain neutral. The data underscores a clear and growing commitment within the in-house legal community to embrace AI and legal technology.

### ATTITUDES TOWARD ACTIVELY IMPROVING AI PROFICIENCY

*Are you actively seeking to improve your AI proficiency and understanding of legal technology?*





# Participant Profile

## COMPANY REVENUE

Less than \$100M	12%
\$100M to <\$500M	16%
\$500M to <\$1B	12%
\$1B to <\$2B	9%
\$2B to <\$5B	15%
\$5B or more	35%



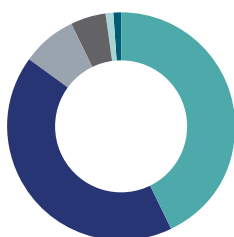
## LEGAL DEPARTMENT STAFF

1 staff	9%
2 to 4 staff	19%
5 to 9 staff	16%
10 or more staff	57%



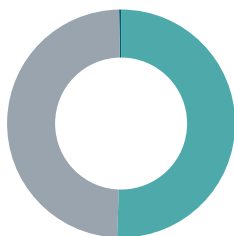
## COMPANY TYPE

Private	43%
Public	42%
Non-profit	8%
Wholly-owned subsidiary	5%
Government	1%
Other	1%



## GENDER

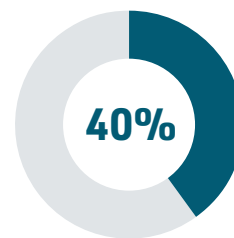
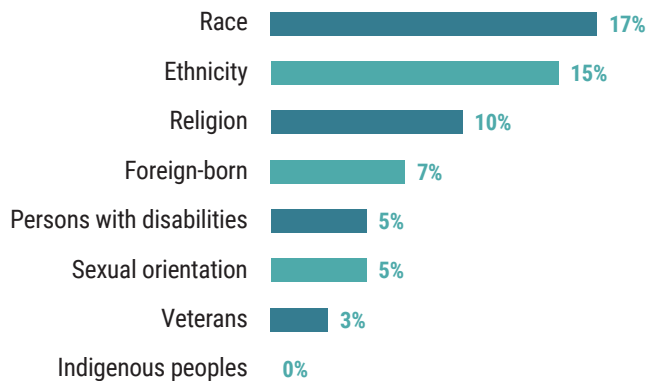
Female	50.7%
Male	49.3%
Non-binary	0.1%



## INDUSTRY

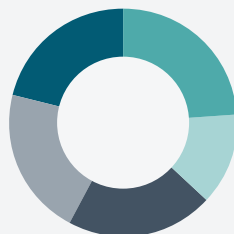
Technology	16%
Manufacturing	13%
Financial services	10%
Healthcare	6%
Insurance	6%
Consumer products	4%
Pharmaceutical/medical devices	4%
Retail/wholesale	4%
Engineering and construction	3%
Oil and gas	3%
Professional services	3%
Real estate	3%
Telecommunications	3%
Transportation	3%
Chemical/metal	2%
Life sciences	2%
Utilities	2%
Association	1%
Education services	1%
Government	1%
Media	1%
Restaurants/hospitality	1%
Foundation	0%
Higher education	0%
Publishing	0%
Waste management	0%
Other	7%

## MINORITIES AND UNDERREPRESENTED GROUPS

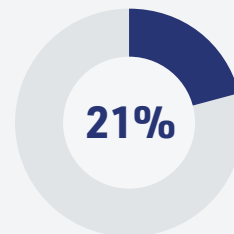


Member of an underrepresented group

## LAW SCHOOL GRADUATION YEAR

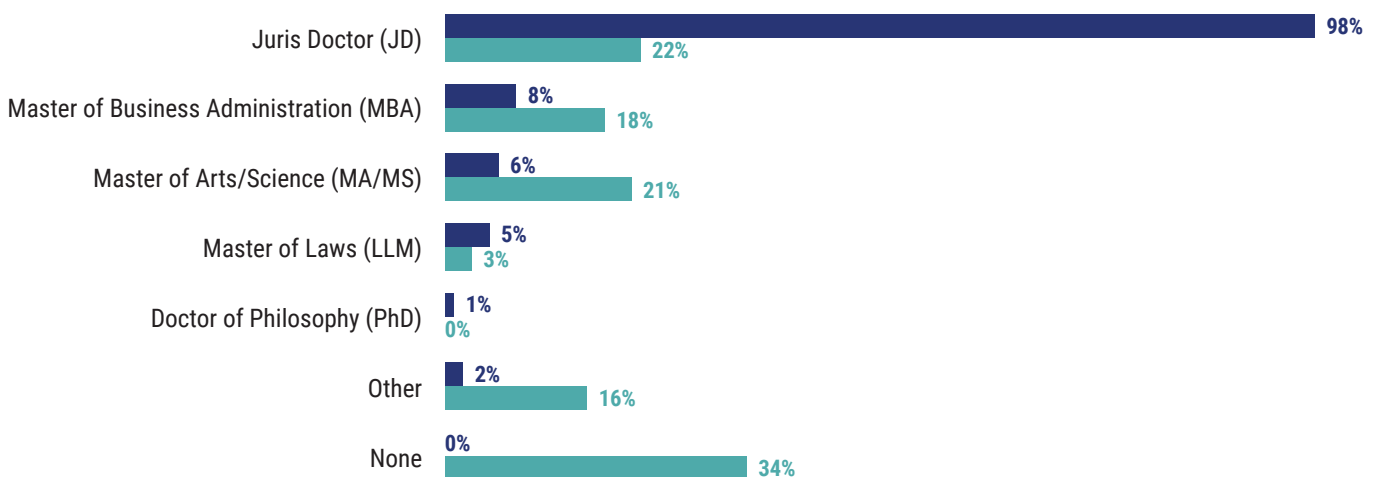


## LAW SCHOOL ATTENDED



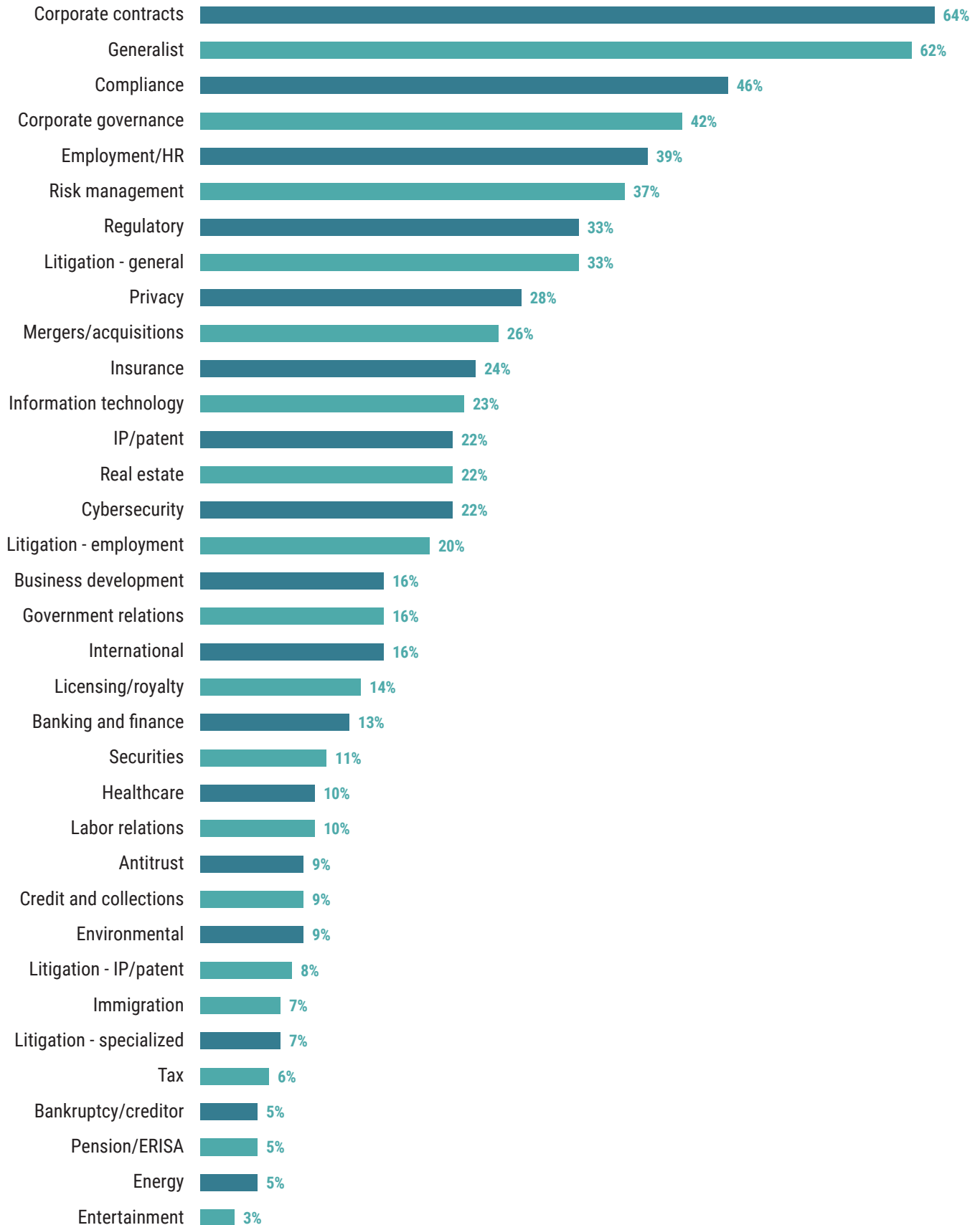
Attended a top 20 law school

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