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2023 Lateral Partner Satisfaction Survey

by

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MAJOR, LINDSEY & AFRICA

2023

LATERAL PARTNER SATISFACTION SURVEY

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BACKGROUND

In 1996, Major, Lindsey & Africa (MLA) launched its first Lateral Partner Satisfaction Survey, a comprehensive study analyzing the lateral partner hiring and integration process. While a great deal has changed in the legal profession and with lateral partner hiring since 1996, a number of key data points noted in this Report have remained remarkably consistent.

This Survey was developed by MLA and administered by the Thomson Reuters Institute, the legal market research arm and the external thought leadership brand for Thomson Reuters. The Survey allowed lateral partners to answer confidentially and anonymously, and at no time was MLA made aware of their names or firms, either individually or in the aggregate.

MAJOR, LINDSEY & AFRICA

INTRODUCTION

Much has happened in the 27 years since we first conducted the Lateral Partner Satisfaction Survey. The U.S. elected it's first African American president and Vice President; technology has placed access to vast stores of knowledge in the palm of our hands; and a deadly virus shut down most human activity, worldwide, for two years. In our five surveys conducted over this same period, generations of lateral partners have been consistent in identifying two factors as key reasons they left their prior firm and were attracted to their current firm: 1) how well the firm supports and helps elevate their practice, and 2) culture.

As lateral partner acquisitions remain the primary growth strategy for most of Big Law, the persistence of these two factors should be burrowed deep into every firm's recruiting and retention efforts. These factors are not gender specific, nor do they vary widely for different practice areas or levels of seniority. The extent to which a lateral partner feels and observes these factors, as they integrate into a new firm, will greatly influence how satisfied they are with the move, and whether they choose to make the firm their long-term home rather than decamp yet again.

WHY LATERAL PARTNER SATISFACTION IS IMPORTANT

In the introduction to our 2006 Survey, Jon Lindsey, our firm's New York founding partner and the principal author of the four previous Survey Reports, wrote:

> *The lateral movement of partners between law firms has been called "perhaps the most profound aspect of the metamorphosis of the legal profession" of the last several decades [1]. Today, as never before, law firms function in an era of free agency. Where law firms once expected partners to stay until death or retirement, today all but a handful utilize the addition of lateral partners as a critical element of their growth or even their survival. Just as in corporate America or professional sports, the bonds between the employer and its key professionals have eroded; it has become entirely acceptable for a star to switch "teams" when it is in his or her professional interest to do so, or for a team to jettison a hitter who can no longer hit home runs.*
>
> *Because of the significant sums of money at stake, whether a lateral partner is Satisfied with his or her new firm is not an academic question. Those partners are typically major generators of revenue ("rainmakers") and sources of vital client relationships. Law firms invest heavily in recruiting those lateral partners and (even more expensively) in funding their first three or more months with the firm, when expenses mount but invoices have either not yet been sent to clients or been paid.*
>
> *A dissatisfied lateral partner, at the worst, will simply hitch up the wagon and move on yet again, causing the firm to lose all or much of its investment of money and managerial focus. But even those who remain in an unhappy "marriage" are likely to be less productive and to contribute less to the firm's prosperity and sense of shared enterprise, demoralizing others in the firm.*

In these times of enormous and accelerating structural changes impacting the legal industry, it seemed it would be illuminating to repeat our Survey to see how the needle has moved, if at all, in the "new reality."

1. See ***Managing People in Today's Law Firm*** by E. Weisbord, B. Charnov and J. Lindsey (Quorum Books, 1995), at page 6.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2023 Lateral Partner Satisfaction Survey disclosed a wealth of interesting insights, particularly when viewed against the findings of the 2020 and prior editions.

- **Lateral partners' overall satisfaction remains quite high: 86% reported that they are very (55.4%) or somewhat (30.4%) satisfied with their current firm** (hereinafter "Satisfied"). Only 14% of lateral partners reported that they were "not very satisfied" (10.0%) or "not at all satisfied" (4.2%) (hereinafter "Unsatisfied").

- **A full 83% of lateral partners reported that they would still move to their current firm if they had to do it all over again.** Fourteen percent would have moved but to a different firm, and 3% wished they had stayed at their former firm.

- **Once again, effective integration of laterals into their new firm was the single best predictor of their satisfaction.**

- **Lack of confidence in firm management/strategy was the number one reason for partners to leave their firm** (as it was in 2020). **Compensation was the sixth most important factor in laterals choosing a new firm.** This ranking is consistent with the 2020, 2014, 2006 and 1996 Surveys.

- **The top "pull" factors which attracted partners to their current firms include the firm's perceived ability to support the lateral's practice and help take it to the next level,** the firm's culture and reputation, how well-managed the firm is perceived to be, the firm's financial health, and the personality or style of partners.

- **The cultures of a lateral's former firm and new firm are major drivers of a move.** Firm culture has been a significant factor pushing lateral partners to leave their previous firm and attracting them to their new one and has been the case since the first Survey in 1996.

- **Seventy-five percent of lateral partners increased their originations since joining their new firm** (up significantly from 67% in 2020); only 6% (10% in 2020) reported that originations had decreased. Similarly, **compensation increased for 71% of laterals in the first three years with their new firm.**

- **Compensation guarantees, while routine, continue to be of limited duration.** Seventy-eight percent of lateral partners received compensation guarantees, slightly more than in 2020. Twenty-three percent of lateral partners had their compensation guaranteed only for the remainder of the year, and 43% for the remainder of the year plus the following year. Only 9% reported receiving guaranteed compensation for the remainder of the year and for the next two years, and **only 2% won guarantees for more than the two next years plus the rest of the year.** Twenty-two percent joined their new firm without any guarantee, consistent with the findings of the 2020 and 2014 Surveys.

- **Use of search firm did not increase satisfaction unless the recruiter added real value in the process.** Forty-four percent of lateral partners reported using a search firm. While 86% of those partners reported that they were either "very satisfied" or "somewhat satisfied" with their search firm's efforts, simply going through a search firm did not correspond with lateral partners being more Satisfied with their new firm. Only when the recruiter

added significant value -- by assisting with a business plan, providing detailed information about law firms, and/or assisting in negotiations and the like – was lateral satisfaction higher.

- **Lateral integration continues to improve.** Firms are continuing to improve their efforts to integrate lateral partners, with 83% of lateral partners seeing their firm's integration efforts being at least somewhat effective or very effective. Forty-nine percent of those who joined their new firm in the last three years gave at least a 4.0 rating (on a scale of 1 to 5) to their new firm on cross-selling, compared to a 3.2 rating among all lateral partners. Opportunities to improve, however, remain. Female and Black lateral partners indicated a greater need to have a more effective integration plan, including the need for assistance with cross-selling the new partner's expertise within the firm.

- **Financial due diligence by lateral partners declined.** There was a noticeable decline in the already woeful financial due diligence conducted by lateral partners. **Only 20% of lateral partners examined their new firm's financial statements, leases, or loan documents prior to joining, down from 29% in 2020. Remarkably, only 55% of lateral partners claimed to have reviewed the partnership agreement prior to joining their new law firms.**

- **Lateral partners are becoming more diverse.** Thirty percent of the participants in this year's Survey were female compared to 20% in 2014, and 15% in 2006. Fourteen percent of the lateral partners identified as Black, Hispanic, Asian Pacific, or mixed race, up from 12% in 2020. Asian Pacific lateral partners increased to 6% in 2023 from 4% in 2020, and those identifying as Black increased to 3% from 2.4% in 2020.[2]

- **Female laterals were slightly less likely to be Satisfied than males (83% vs 87%).** These levels of satisfaction by gender are consistent with those from past surveys in 2020 (83% versus 88%) and 2014 (83% versus 88%). Eighty-eight percent of females who moved in the last year to their current firm were Satisfied compared to 94% of males.

- **Compensation was a bigger driver of lateral moves for those who had moved in the last three years,** and a greater percentage in this cohort received compensation guarantees (84% versus 73% who moved four or more years ago).

2 The ethnic categories used in the Survey tracked those previously used by the American Bar Association. Throughout the balance of this Report, they will be listed as listed as White, Black, Hispanic, and Asian Pacific. Because of the small number of respondents from the non-White categories, it is difficult to draw any statistically meaningful conclusions from those responses.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Jon Lindsey is the New York founding partner of Major, Lindsey & Africa. Over nearly three decades he has placed scores of partners and practice groups at many of the world's top law firms, and assisted firms in merger and branch office acquisitions. As the former global co-chair of MLA's Partner Practice Group, he helped to set strategy and coordinate the partner practice for the firm's 25 domestic and international offices. Jon previously practiced with Debevoise & Plimpton, as an Assistant United States Attorney in the Southern District of New York, and with New York City's Planning Commission.

Jon was the subject of an extensive profile in ***Of Counsel*** magazine, was one of nine members inducted into ***LawDragon's*** inaugural **Hall of Fame**, and is one of a handful of recruiters repeatedly featured in LawDragon's "100 Legal Consultants You Need to Know." He is the co-author of "Managing People in Today's Law Firm" (Quorum Books, 1995), and the principal author of the 1996, 2006, 2014 and 2020 **Lateral Partner Satisfaction Surveys**. He has written numerous articles for ***The American Lawyer, Corporate Counsel Magazine***, ***The National Law Journal, The New York Law Journal, International Financial Law Review*** and other publications. He is widely quoted in leading newspapers and legal trade publications and has been invited to speak by the American Management Association, the Federal Bar Council, the Association of General Counsel, PLI and numerous other groups, on topics ranging from innovative law firm retention and partner compensation policies to best practices in staffing the global law department.

Ronald (Ron) E. Wood is a Managing Director in Major, Lindsey & Africa's Los Angeles office, and the author and creator of MLA's ground-breaking **2022 Law Firm Culture Survey**. He is a frequent blogger, panelist and presenter on a wide range of issues impacting law firm economics, partner and practice group recruiting, and firm culture. His articles have appeared in ***Daily Journal, LA Lawyer***, **Reuters/Westlaw Today** , ***Bloomberg BNA***, and ***FCPA Repor***t, among others. Ron joined MLA after more than 30 years as a securities litigation, regulatory and enforcement lawyer, during which he tried more than 50 cases in federal and state courts, federal administrative proceedings, and private arbitrations. Having been a partner in large and small firms, as well as a senior federal enforcement lawyer and senior in-house counsel, he brings an informed insider's perspective to legal recruiting.

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THE SEARCH PROCESS

A. NUMBER OF FIRMS CONSIDERED

Question 9 of the Survey asked respondents about the number of firms they were presented to or interviewed with as part of their search process. Figure 1 sets forth the breakdown among 1,235 respondents. Table 1 sets forth the breakdown of responses sorted by gender and ethnicity, as well as by respondents who described themselves as "Satisfied" (including "very satisfied" or "somewhat satisfied") or "Unsatisfied" (including "not very satisfied" and "not at all satisfied") with their move to their current firm.

For the purposes of this Report, we have highlighted responses in the accompanying Tables where the response rate is either higher or lower by 5% or more than the average response rate for that question. Where a mean score has been used, figures that are statistically significantly higher or lower than the average are also highlighted.

Figure 1 - Q9. Number of Firms Considered

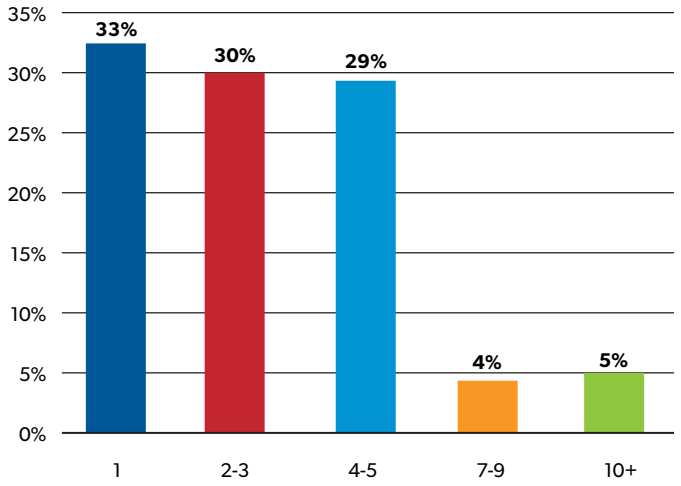


Table 1 - Q9. Number of Firms Considered

	Total	Satisfaction		Gender		Ethnicity				
		Satisfied	Not satisfied	Male	Female	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian Pacific	Mixed races
1	33%	33%	29%	30%	38%	32%	29%	35%	30%	53%
2 to 3	30%	28%	37%	29%	29%	29%	26%	33%	32%	12%
4 to 6	29%	29%	27%	31%	24%	29%	43%	25%	29%	29%
7 to 9	4%	5%	4%	5%	3%	4%	3%	5%	5%	0%
10 or more	5%	5%	4%	5%	5%	5%	0%	3%	5%	6%
Base	1,235	965	158	769	321	886	35	40	63	17

Key Findings >>>

KEY FINDINGS

- Sixty-three percent of all lateral partners considered only one to three firms or fewer before moving. Of those, **33% considered only the firm they ended up joining.** This can sometimes result from a firm reaching out directly to a partner, often through a preexisting relationship, who does not then undertake a proactive search to compare possible alternatives.
- Women partners were more likely than men to consider only a single firm, while men were more likely than women to approach 4-6 firms as part of their process.
- Black partners were the most likely to consider 4 to 6 firms, while Hispanic partners were the most likely to consider 2 to 3 firms.
- Three quarters of partners (76%) who considered three firms or fewer wish they had spoken to more firms.
- Seventy percent of respondents who have made only a single lateral move wish they had spoken to more firms.

B. LENGTH OF SEARCH

1,225 respondents answered Question 10 of the Survey regarding the length of their search. Figure 2 sets forth the breakdown among all respondents. Table 2 sets forth the breakdown of responses sorted by gender, ethnicity and overall satisfaction.

Figure 2 – Q10: Length of Search

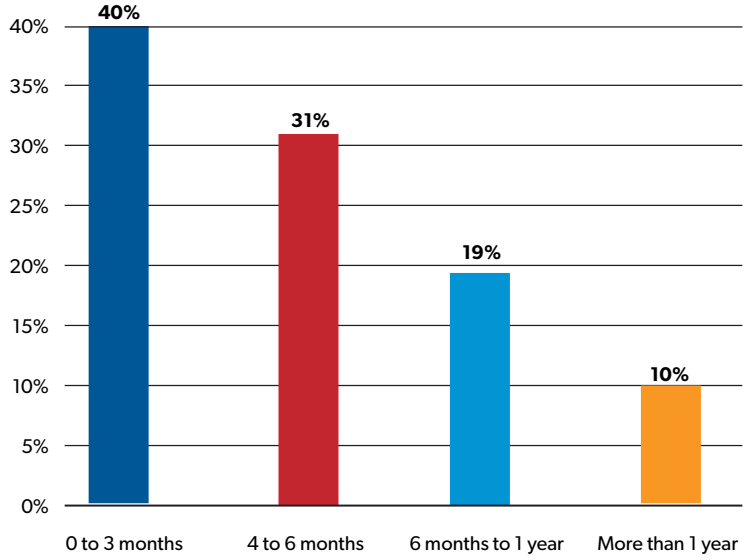


Table 2 – Q10: Length of Search

	Total	Satisfaction		Gender		Ethnicity				
		Satisfied	Not satisfied	Male	Female	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian Pacific	Mixed races
0 to 3 months	40%	41%	35%	38%	43%	38%	49%	48%	42%	53%
4 to 6 months	31%	31%	32%	33%	28%	32%	29%	15%	34%	24%
6 months to 1 year	19%	19%	22%	20%	17%	19%	17%	25%	19%	12%
More than 1 year	10%	10%	11%	9%	12%	11%	6%	13%	5%	12%
Base	1125	959	158	765	319	882	35	40	62	17

Key Findings >>>

KEY FINDINGS

- The most common length of a search is three months or less, and the number of firms seen correlates generally with length of search time: the longer the search, the more firms had been considered. On average, 2.6 firms were considered when the search was 0-3 months. And 3.6, 3.8, and 4.1 firms were the average number of firms considered when the search length was 3-6 months, 6-12 months, and 12+ months, respectively.
- Forty percent of respondents stated that their search (from deciding to explore the market to accepting an offer) concluded within three months, a significant increase from 2020's figure of 34%. We might conjecture that the increased use of video conferencing due to the COVID pandemic – with the reduced need for either side to set aside time to travel to various cities for interviews – has materially truncated the process.
- A lengthier search does not appear to have a direct impact on satisfaction levels, but the accuracy of information lateral partners receive from the firms they are considering does appear to have a direct impact on satisfaction.

C. MOVING TO OR FROM A MORE OR LESS PROFITABLE FIRM

Question 3 of the Survey asked respondents whether they had joined their current firm from a firm with higher profitability, lower profitability, in the same range or from public service or an in-house position. Figure 2a sets forth the breakdown among 1,282 respondents. Table 2a sets forth the breakdown of responses sorted by gender, ethnicity and overall satisfaction.

Figure 2a – Q3. Did You Join Your Current Firm From…?

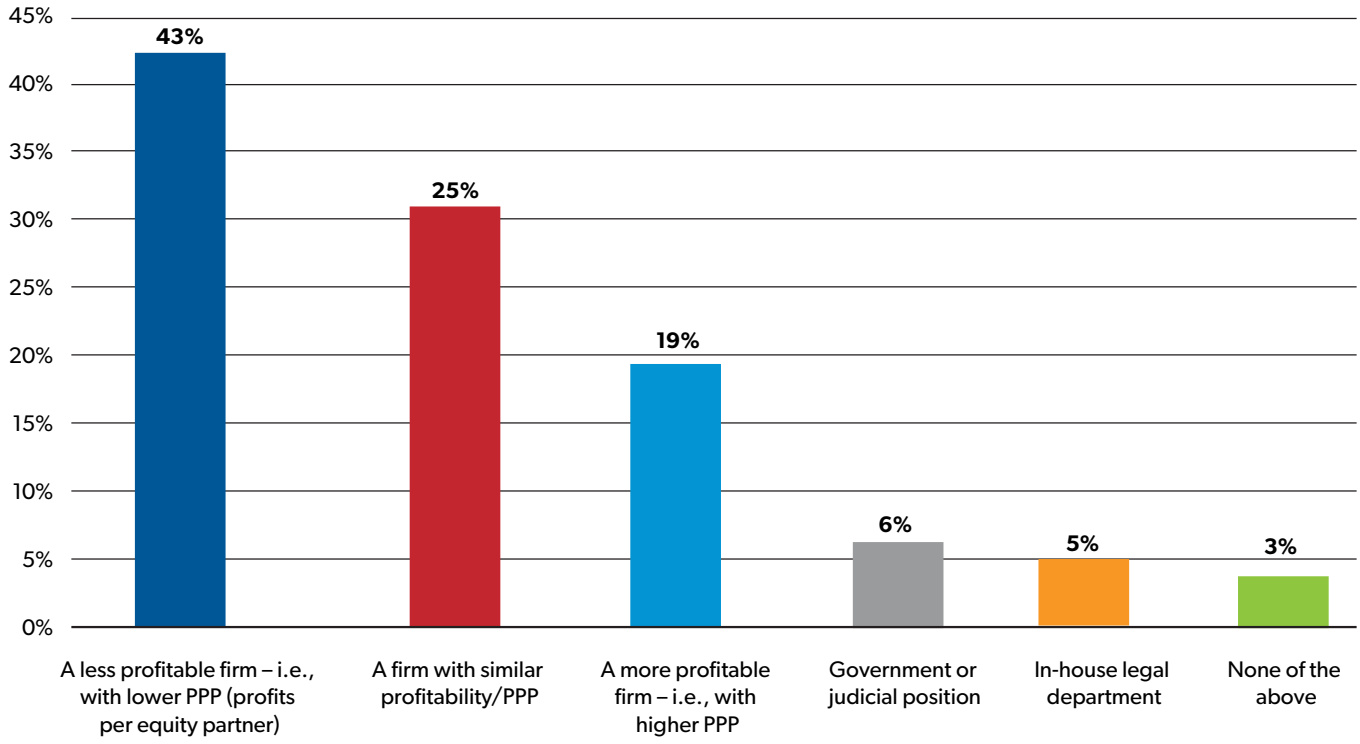


Table >>>

Table 2a – Q3. Did You Join Your Current Firm From…?

	Total	Satisfaction		Gender		Ethnicity				
		Satisfied	Not satisfied	Male	Female	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian Pacific	Mixed races
A less profitable firm – i.e., with lower PPP (profits per equity partner)	43%	43%	41%	42%	44%	43%	49%	46%	44%	29%
A firm with similar profitability/PPP	25%	24%	28%	25%	23%	24%	20%	26%	24%	29%
A more profitable firm – i.e., with higher PPP	19%	18%	23%	20%	17%	19%	17%	15%	16%	35%
Government or judicial position	6%	6%	3%	5%	8%	6%	9%	5%	3%	0%
In-house legal department	5%	6%	1%	5%	6%	5%	3%	8%	11%	6%
None of the above	4%	3%	4%	3%	3%	4%	3%	0%	2%	0%
Base	1282	967	160	773	320	890	35	39	63	17

KEY FINDINGS

- **Twice as many lateral partners moved from a less profitable than from a more profitable firm** (43% vs 19%). Just as a ballplayer who can hit a curve ball gets to move from Triple A to the major leagues, desirable laterals have an opportunity to upgrade their professional platforms.
- Average profitability of the new firm, per se, appeared to have no material impact on overall satisfaction although an individual's compensation does.
- Levels of candor were perceived to be somewhat lower by those joining from a more profitable firm (16% felt the firm had not been candid compared to only 11% of those who joined from a less profitable firm).

Other less surprising findings included the following:

- Partners coming from a less profitable firm were more likely to see an increase in compensation in the first three years of joining their new firm: 75%, versus 64% who joined from a more profitable firm.
- Lateral partners in Washington D.C were less likely than average to be moving from a less profitable firm (33% versus 43% overall), in large part because more of them were coming from a government or judicial position (18% versus 6% average) rather than from a law firm. All of those public servants received a raise upon moving to the private sector.

D. REASONS FOR LEAVING FORMER FIRM

Question 12 addressed the reasons why lateral partners left their former firms. 1,204 respondents answered this question. Respondents were permitted to choose one or more of the following factors:

- Compensation
- Client conflicts
- Firm's financial health
- Disparate treatment due to sexual orientation
- Lack of support to build practice
- Lack of confidence in firm management/strategy

- Did not like the firm's culture
- Needed more/different offices
- Disparate treatment due to gender
- Disparate treatment due to race
- Retirement policy / age-related concerns
- Lack of leadership opportunities
- Remote work / office attendance policy
- Asked to leave

Figure 3 sets forth the breakdown among all respondents. Table 3 sets forth the breakdown of responses sorted by gender, ethnicity and overall satisfaction.

Figure 3 – Q12. Why Did You Leave Your Former Firm?

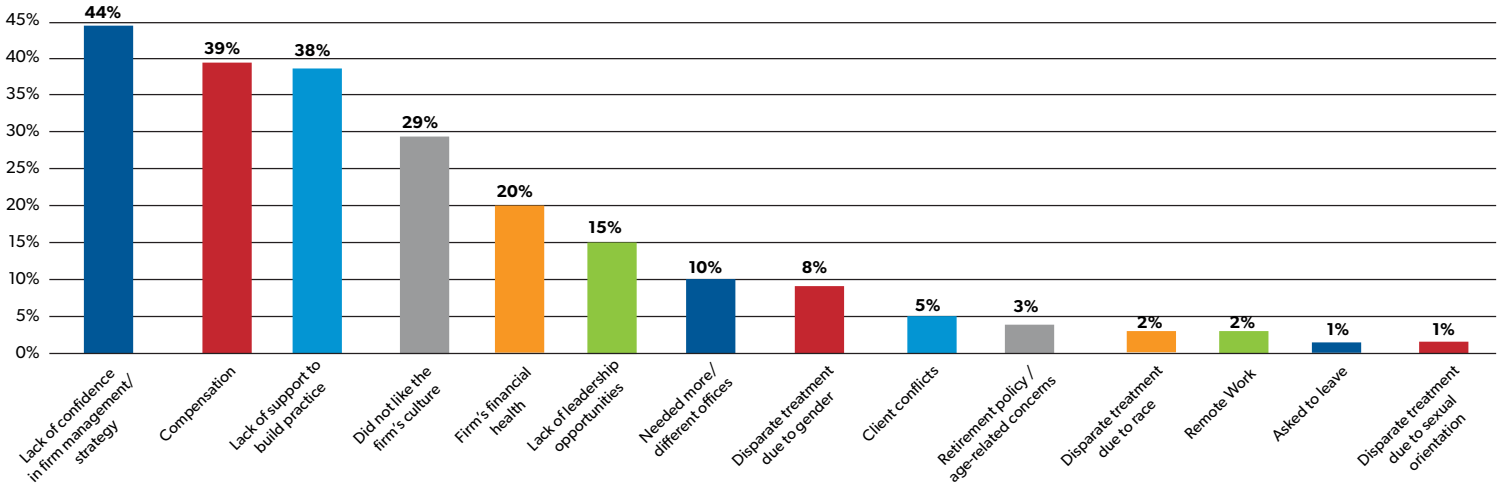


Table 3 – Q12. Why Did You Leave Your Former Firm?

	Total	Satisfaction		Gender		Ethnicity				
		Satisfied	Not satisfied	Male	Female	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian Pacific	Mixed races
Lack of confidence in firm management/strategy	44%	45%	41%	43%	48%	45%	41%	35%	41%	35%
Compensation	39%	39%	38%	39%	40%	39%	44%	38%	43%	41%
Lack of support to build practice	38%	38%	38%	36%	42%	37%	44%	25%	37%	41%
Did not like the firm's culture	29%	29%	25%	26%	37%	29%	27%	15%	35%	24%
Firm's financial health	20%	20%	18%	21%	18%	19%	12%	23%	19%	29%
Lack of leadership opportunities	15%	15%	12%	13%	20%	14%	18%	10%	16%	12%
Needed more/different offices	10%	11%	8%	11%	9%	11%	9%	10%	5%	12%
Disparate treatment due to gender	8%	8%	11%	1%	26%	9%	0%	13%	10%	6%
Client conflicts	5%	5%	4%	5%	5%	5%	0%	8%	8%	18%
Retirement policy / age-related concerns	3%	3%	3%	3%	1%	3%	0%	3%	0%	0%
Disparate treatment due to race	2%	3%	0%	2%	3%	0%	29%	5%	16%	6%
Remote work/office attendance policy	2%	2%	1%	1%	3%	2%	6%	0%	2%	0%
Asked to leave	1%	1%	3%	2%	1%	2%	0%	3%	0%	6%
Disparate treatment due to sexual orientation	1%	1%	0%	1%	1%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Base	1204	961	159	770	316	883	34	40	63	17

Key Findings >>>

KEY FINDINGS

- **Only 1.4% of all lateral partners admitted that they were asked to leave their firms**, a figure similar to our findings in 2020 and 2014. In our experience, and as described to us by scores of firm chairs and managing partners, this is significantly lower than the probable actual figure. In part, the under-reporting may be attributed to the lateral partner's need to save face. Even though this was a completely anonymous and confidential survey, partners would much prefer, even in their own minds, to attribute their departure to other factors. For example, if their old firm's culture was to chop partners seen as "dead wood," the partner could attribute their departure to culture. If a firm tells partners their compensation is to be cut by 50% as a way of forcing them out without using the words "get out," the partners could list compensation as the reason they left.
- **Compensation is a driver to leave a firm for a higher proportion of laterals than it has been in past years (39% in 2023 vs 31% in 2020 and 33% in 2014).**
- Lack of confidence in firm management or strategy is a stronger driver for more junior lateral partners under the age of 40, at 56% (vs 44% for all laterals). The impact of this factor decreases as the age of a partner increases.
- **Lateral partners who leave over a lack of confidence in management or a lack of support to build a practice tend to take longer preparing to move. They also are more likely to use a search firm.**
- **Female partners were more likely than male partners to leave due to culture and a lack of leadership opportunities (and, unsurprisingly, because of disparate treatment due to gender).**
- Black partners were more likely to rank compensation and a lack of support to build one's practice and less likely to rank the firm's financial health as important factors in deciding to leave.
- Black and Asian Pacific respondents were most likely to cite disparate treatment due to race as a reason to leave.
- Very few overall considered a firm's remote work / office attendance policy as a factor in their decision to leave.

E. FACTORS MOST IMPORTANT IN CHOOSING CURRENT FIRM

Question 13 asked respondents about the factors most important to them in choosing their current firm. 1202 respondents answered this question. Respondents were permitted to choose one or more of the following factors and rank them on a scale of 1 to 5 where 5 is ***Most important*** and 1 is ***Least important:***

- Their perception of the firm's culture and reputation
- The personality or style of partners they met or knew previously
- How well-managed the firm appeared to be
- The level of anticipated compensation
- The compensation structure
- The firm's financial health
- The firm's existing client base
- The firm's perceived ability to support their practice and help take it to the next level
- The firm's national or international presence
- The firm's remote work /office attendance policy

Figure 4 sets forth the breakdown among all respondents, as well as comparisons with results from the 2020, 2014, 2006 and 1996 Surveys. Table 4 sets forth the breakdown of responses to the 2023 Survey sorted by gender, ethnicity and overall satisfaction.

Figure >>>

Figure 4 – Q13. What Factors Were Most Important in Choosing Your Current Firm?

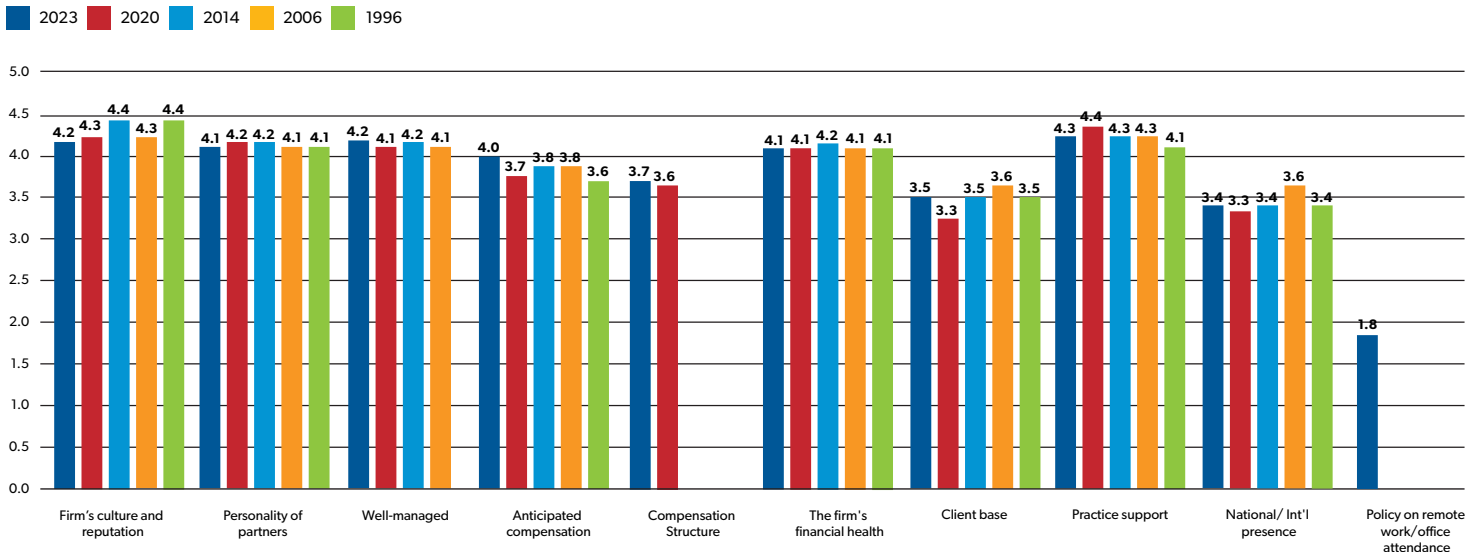


Table 4 - Q13. What Factors Were Most Important in Choosing Your Current Firm?

	Total	Satisfaction		Gender		Ethnicity				
		Satisfied	Not satisfied	Male	Female	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian Pacific	Mixed races
Practice support	4.3	4.4	4.2	4.3	4.5	4.3	4.5	4.5	4.3	4.5
Well-managed	4.2	4.2	3.9	4.2	4.3	4.2	4.1	4.4	4.0	4.5
Firm's culture and reputation	4.2	4.3	4.0	4.2	4.3	4.2	4.1	4.3	4.1	4.5
Personality of partners	4.1	4.2	3.9	4.1	4.2	4.1	4.0	4.2	4.0	4.4
The firm's financial health	4.1	4.2	4.0	4.1	4.2	4.1	4.1	4.3	4.2	4.5
Anticipated compensation	4.0	3.9	4.1	4.0	4.0	3.9	4.1	4.3	4.0	3.7
Compensation structure	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.8	3.7	3.7	4.1	3.8	3.7
Client base	3.5	3.5	3.2	3.5	3.5	3.4	3.5	3.6	3.7	3.8
National / Int'l presence	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.2
Policy on remote work/ office attendance	1.8	1.8	1.7	1.6	2.2	1.8	2.1	2.0	2.1	1.6
Base	1202	968	159	773	320	889	35	40	63	17

KEY FINDINGS

- **A firm's ability to support the lateral's practice and help take it to the next level continues to be the most important factor to laterals choosing a new firm**, just as it was in 2020.
- How well-managed the firm is was the second biggest pull factor, a substantial jump from 4th in the 2020 Survey. A firm's "culture and reputation" was the next most important factor.

Key Findings Continued >>>

- Contrary to popular belief, **lateral partners did not rate either the level of anticipated compensation or compensation structure as the most important factor in choosing a new firm. In fact, anticipated compensation was ranked the sixth most significant factor of the nine motivating considerations.** Strikingly, this is in line with more than a quarter century of results, as anticipated compensation was ranked fifth or sixth in each of the 1996, 2006 and 2014 Surveys. The compensation structure of the new firm, a separate factor, was ranked seventh, just below anticipated compensation in importance.
- **Culture remains highly important**, just as it was in each of the four previous Surveys. Culture was a key reason lateral partners left their old firm and were attracted to the new one. In addition, culture as a reason is somewhat reinforced by the fourth highest ranked factor, "personality and style of partners they met or knew previously" – tied with a firm's financial health (4.1).
- The least significant among the nine factors for many partners was the firm's policy on remote work /office attendance, a new addition to this year's survey. "The firm's international or national presence" was the second lowest factor in importance in 2023.

F. EXTENT TO WHICH EXPECTATIONS WERE MET

Respondents were then asked in Question 14 to rate the extent to which their expectations regarding the factors listed in Question 13 were ultimately met at their new firm. (A rating of 3.0 indicates that expectations were met, 5.0 if exceeded, 1.0 if not met.) Figure 5 sets forth the breakdown among the 1,202 respondents, as well as comparisons with results from the 2020, 2014, 2006 and 1996 Surveys. Table 5 sets forth the breakdown of responses to the 2023 Survey sorted by gender, ethnicity and overall satisfaction.

Figure 5 – Q14. To What Extent Were Your Expectations Met?

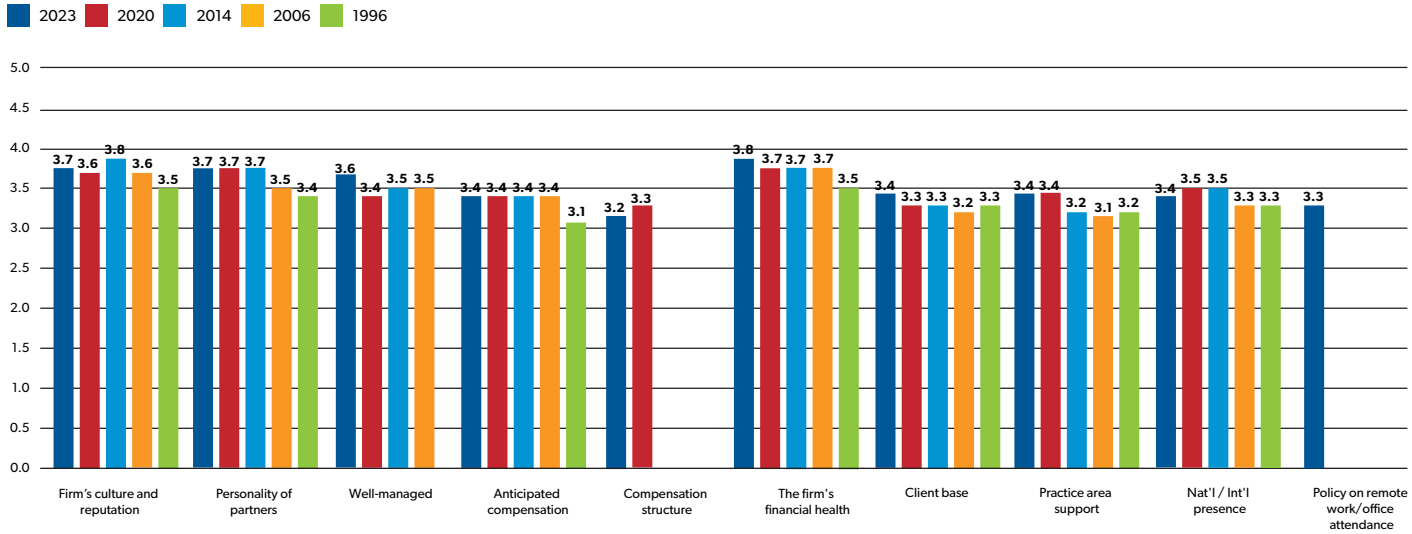


Table >>>

Table 5 - Q14. To What Extent Were Your Expectations Met?

	Total	Satisfaction		Gender		Ethnicity				
		Satisfied	Not satisfied	Male	Female	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian Pacific	Mixed races
The firm's financial health	3.8	3.9	3.2	3.8	3.7	3.8	3.4	3.8	3.4	3.6
Your perception of the firm's culture and reputation	3.7	3.9	2.1	3.7	3.6	3.7	3.3	3.6	3.6	3.4
The personality or style of partners you met or knew previously	3.7	3.8	2.5	3.7	3.6	3.7	3.3	3.7	3.6	3.5
How well-managed the firm appeared to be	3.6	3.8	2.2	3.6	3.5	3.7	3.0	3.6	3.3	3.7
The level of anticipated compensation	3.4	3.6	2.3	3.5	3.4	3.5	3.1	3.5	3.4	3.2
The firm's existing client base	3.4	3.6	2.6	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.5	3.5	3.6	3.2
The firm's perceived ability to support your practice and help take it to the next level	3.4	3.6	1.9	3.4	3.3	3.4	3.1	3.4	3.3	3.1
The firm's national or international presence	3.4	3.5	3.0	3.5	3.4	3.5	3.2	3.5	3.3	3.2
The firm's policy on remote work/office attendance	3.3	3.3	3.0	3.2	3.4	3.3	3.1	3.2	3.3	3.3
The compensation structure	3.2	3.4	2.1	3.2	3.1	3.2	2.9	3.4	3.2	3.0
Base	1202	967	159	773	320	889	35	40	63	17

KEY FINDINGS

- As Figure 5 and Table 5 make graphically and colorfully clear, **there is an overwhelmingly strong correlation between expectations being met and ultimate satisfaction.** As our previous Surveys have noted, if life could be summed up in a single pseudo-mathematical theorem, it might be **Satisfaction = Reality/Expectation.**
- Just as firms do not wish to be unpleasantly surprised by their new partners, lateral partners are far more likely to remain as satisfied and productive members of their new firms if what they get is roughly what they had hoped for, rather than less.
- Predictably, **partners who were Unsatisfied with their new firms were hugely disappointed on every one of the nine factors examined**, while those who were Satisfied had their expectations met or exceeded in every instance.
- Interestingly, of all the factors examined, **expectations about the firm's financial health, culture, and "personality/style of partners" were exceeded to the greatest extent.**
- **Support for a lateral's practice is the most important factor in choosing a new firm but is being underdelivered relative to the weight lateral partners tend to place on it.** (For Unsatisfied laterals it is the most disappointing of all nine factors.) It will be critical for firms that hope to retain key lateral partners to periodically reevaluate staffing, ancillary support (tax, ERISA, marketing, or whatever else is critical to the lateral partner's practice) and to track each lateral partner's progress carefully as part of the integration process. This will enable firms not only to spot problem situations before they spiral out of control, but also to track successes and tout them to future lateral candidates.

G. INFORMATION OBTAINED PRIOR TO MOVING

Question 15 asked respondents whether they had obtained "adequate and accurate information" about five different aspects of their new firm before joining. 1,180 respondents answered this question. These aspects included:

- The financial health of the new firm
- Practice support (complementary practitioners, associates, tax, marketing, etc.)
- Compensation practices and procedures
- Governance mechanisms and procedures
- Lateral integration process

Figure 6 sets forth the breakdown among all respondents. Table 6 sets forth the breakdown of responses sorted by gender, ethnicity and overall satisfaction.

Figure 6 - Q15. Before Joining The Firm, Did You Obtain Adequate And Accurate Information About: (% who said yes)

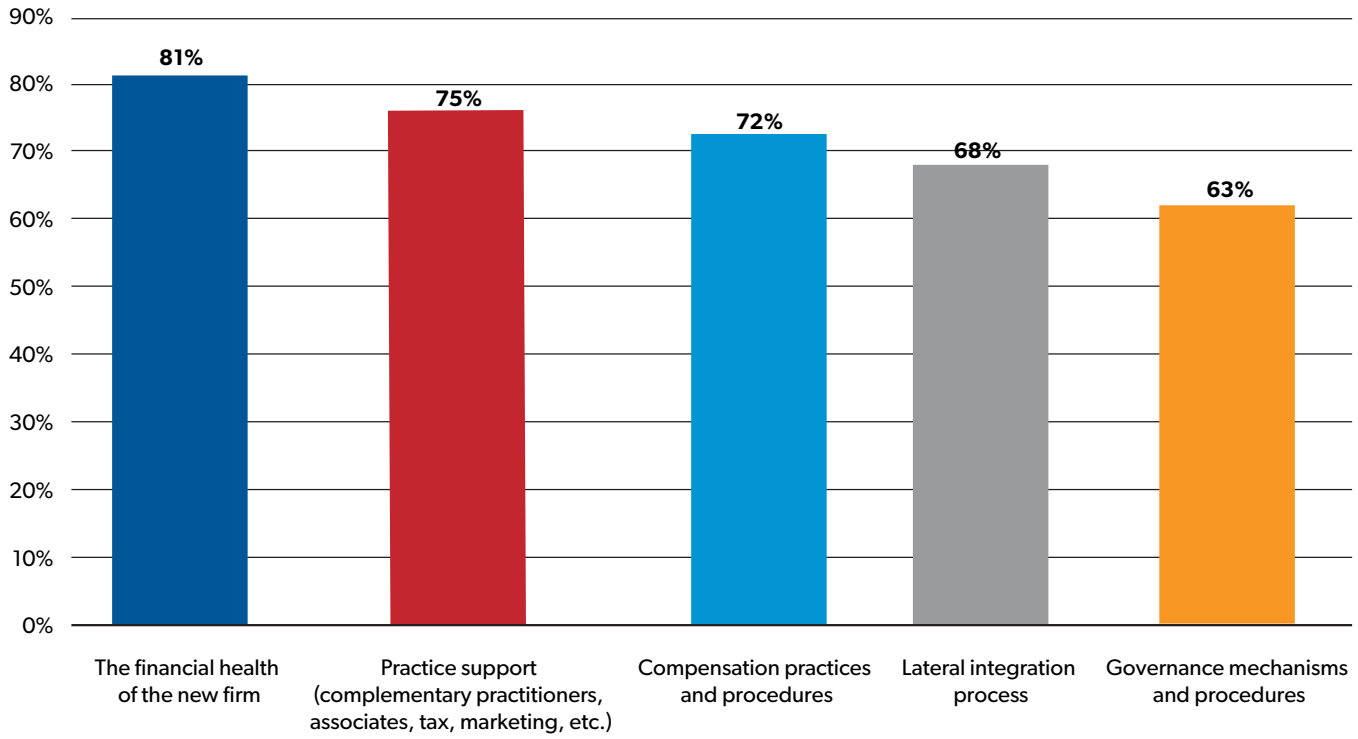


Table >>>

Table 6 - Q15. Before Joining The Firm, Did You Obtain Adequate And Accurate Information About:

	Total	Satisfaction		Gender		Ethnicity				
		Satisfied	Not satisfied	Male	Female	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian Pacific	Mixed races
The financial health of the new firm	81%	83%	71%	82%	78%	82%	77%	78%	73%	77%
Practice support (complementary practitioners, associates, tax, marketing, etc.)	75%	79%	46%	77%	70%	76%	59%	73%	71%	77%
Compensation practices and procedures	72%	77%	42%	75%	67%	74%	71%	60%	65%	82%
Lateral integra-tion process	68%	73%	38%	71%	62%	69%	46%	60%	71%	88%
Governance mechanisms and procedures	64%	67%	42%	68%	54%	66%	34%	58%	67%	47%
Base	1180	968	159	773	321	889	35	40	63	17

KEY FINDINGS

- **Fully 81% of all lateral partners felt that they had received "adequate and accurate information" about their new firm's financial health (up from 77% in 2020 and down from 2014's even higher 87%), yet only 20% reviewed the firm's financial statements/lease/loan documents** and only 27% spoke to the CFO prior to becoming partners in their new firm. (Figure 7) The question, then, is how did the lateral partners who failed to do those basic elements of due diligence gain sufficient comfort that they had received "adequate and accurate information" about the firm's financial health? For some, apparently, it was some combination of little more than looking at the firm's reported numbers on the AmLaw 100 or 200 charts, and having one or more of the firm's partners reassure them that the firm was in good financial shape.
- **Lateral partners felt least informed about the governance mechanisms and procedures, followed by the lateral integration process, yet tellingly effective lateral integration is the greatest single predictor of lateral partner satisfaction.** (See Table 10 and the data in every Lateral Partner Satisfaction Survey since 1996.) This suggests that firms should (a) have a robust and effective lateral integration program, and (b) do a more effective job of making potential lateral partners aware of what that program encompasses and why it is to their benefit.
- **The Survey revealed an enormous discrepancy in satisfaction with their new firm between lateral partners who felt they had obtained adequate and accurate information and those who did not:** 77% Satisfied vs 42% Unsatisfied as to compensation (81% vs only 41% in 2020), 79% vs 46% as to governance, and 79% vs 46% as to practice support.
- Even as to the firm's financial health, where a hefty 83% of the Satisfied partners felt comfortable with the information obtained, 71% of the Unsatisfied felt they had obtained "adequate and accurate information" on that key element. Once again, **Satisfaction = Reality/Expectation** proves devastatingly accurate: those who felt they had sufficient information to have reasonable expectations (or did have reasonable expectations) were far more likely to be satisfied with their new homes.

- **Female lateral partners were significantly less likely than male partners to feel they had obtained adequate and accurate information in almost all these critical areas. Black partners were significantly less likely to feel they had obtained adequate and accurate information about practice support, the lateral integration process and (most starkly) the firm's governance mechanisms.** One might speculate that members of each group felt less comfortable asking what might be viewed as hard questions of firm management.

H. DUE DILIGENCE INQUIRIES

Question 16 covered various due diligence inquiries made by respondents in connection with their search. 1,134 respondents answered this question. Respondents were permitted to choose one or more among the following:

- Meet/call the firm's Chairman/Managing Partner
- Request meeting/call with recent lateral partners to the firm
- Meet/call the firm's CFO
- Review the firm's financial statements/lease/loan documents
- Meet/call the firm's benefits manager
- Review the firm's partnership agreement
- Meet/call the firm's liability carrier and/or request information concerning outstanding claims against the firm
- Review the firm's Peer Report or similar report
- Request meeting/call with the firm's existing clients

Figure 7 sets forth the breakdown among all respondents. Table 7 sets forth the breakdown of responses sorted by gender, ethnicity and overall satisfaction.

Figure 7 – Q16. What Due Diligence Inquiries Did You Undertake?

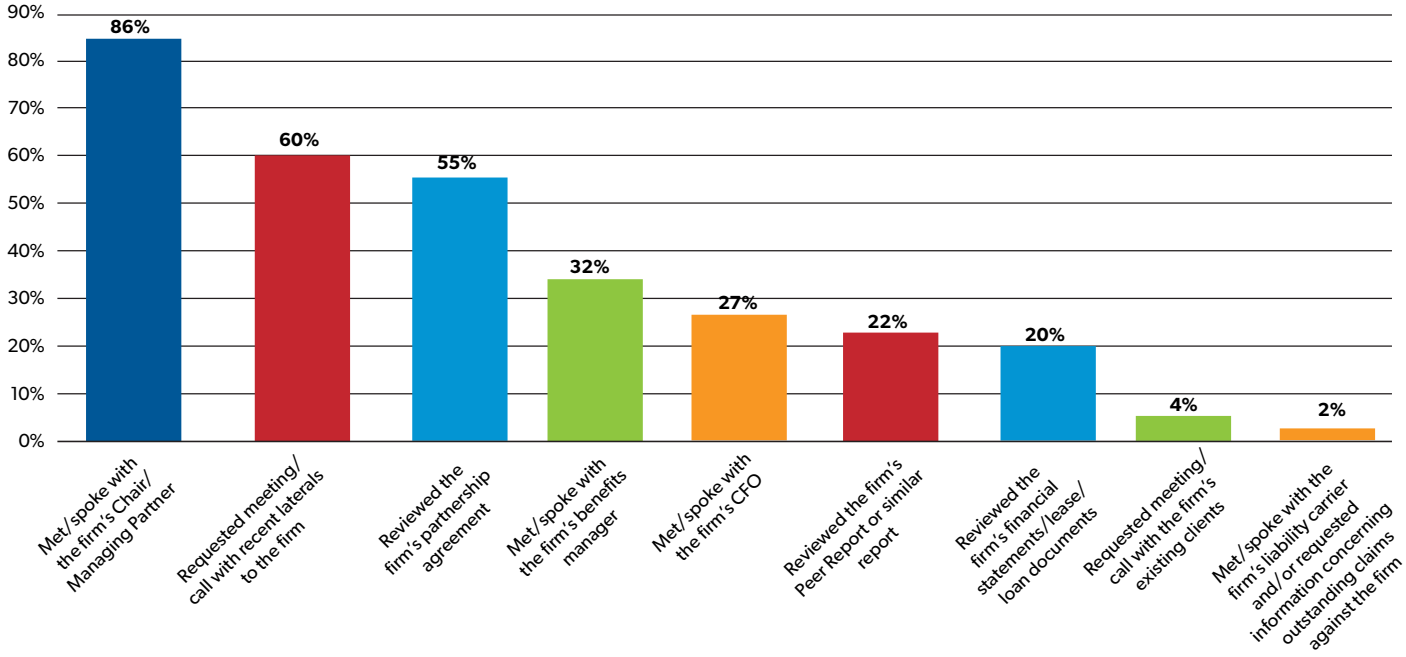


Table >>>

Table 7 - Q16. What Due Diligence Inquiries Did You Undertake?

	Total	Satisfaction		Gender		Ethnicity				
		Satisfied	Not satisfied	Male	Female	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian Pacific	Mixed races
Met/spoke with the firm's Chair/Managing Partner	86%	86%	84%	88%	83%	86%	81%	80%	88%	100%
Requested meeting/call with recent laterals to the firm	60%	61%	55%	58%	67%	60%	63%	74%	61%	60%
Reviewed the firm's partnership agreement	55%	55%	57%	57%	51%	54%	50%	56%	56%	67%
Met/spoke with the firm's benefits manager	32%	32%	33%	29%	39%	32%	19%	33%	34%	40%
Met/spoke with the firm's CFO	27%	27%	30%	28%	27%	28%	25%	28%	22%	47%
Reviewed the firm's Peer Report or similar report	22%	22%	25%	23%	22%	22%	19%	26%	24%	20%
Reviewed the firm's financial statements/ lease/loan documents	20%	20%	19%	21%	16%	21%	9%	8%	17%	40%
Requested meeting/call with the firm's existing clients	4%	4%	3%	4%	4%	4%	9%	3%	10%	0%
Met/spoke with the firm's liability carrier and/or requested information concerning out-standing claims against the firm	2%	2%	5%	2%	3%	2%	0%	3%	5%	0%
Base	1134	938	147	747	305	860	32	39	59	15

KEY FINDINGS

- **The financial due diligence performed by many lateral partner candidates remains less than ideal and is becoming even less frequent:** Only 20% of respondents reported reviewing their new firm's financial statements, lease or loan documents before joining (down from a paltry 29% in 2020 and 37% in 2014). Only 27% reported meeting with the firm's CFO (down from 32% in 2020 and 40% in 2014).
- Tellingly, as was the case in 2020, **only 55% of respondents even claimed to have reviewed the partnership agreement by which they would be bound before joining a new law firm.** If the other 45% of lateral partners were counseling a client who was considering an investment in a real estate or oil and gas or other partnership, and neglected to look at that fundamental document, multiple alarm bells would go off and malpractice insurers would expire of apoplexy.
- **Only 60% of the lateral partners surveyed had met with other recent lateral partners.** This is an important statistic given the overwhelming importance of integrating lateral partners in ensuring that they are satisfied and successful, since other lateral partners (if candid) would likely be the best source of information on how effective the integration process is in fact rather than in theory. Speaking with other lateral partners who recently moved was among the most frequently mentioned suggestions by survey respondents when asked for advice to firms and lawyers considering a move.
- More female lateral partners than males requested a meeting with recent lateral partners, by a margin of 67% to 58%.
- Unsatisfied lateral partners were more than four times as likely as Satisfied laterals to wish they had used a recruiter as an intermediary.

- Partners joining firms with open compensation systems, those who used a legal search firm, and those joining as equity partners rather than non-equity partners were more likely to review the partnership agreement.
- Corporate partners were more likely to meet the firm's CFO, IP lawyers were more likely to review firms' financial documents, and litigators were more likely to request a call with recent lateral partners.

I. PLATFORM CONSIDERATIONS

Question 18 asked respondents to rank the extent to which the following factors influenced their decision to join their current firm:

- Planned expansion/growth into new geographic area(s)
- Planned expansion/growth into new practice area(s)
- Ability to practice internationally/cross-border
- Diversity of the new firm's people
- Anticipated compensation

Figure 8 sets forth the breakdown among the 1,126 respondents. Table 8 sets forth the breakdown of responses sorted by gender, ethnicity and overall satisfaction.

Figure 8 – Q18. How Much of a Consideration Were These Factors for Joining Your Current Firm?

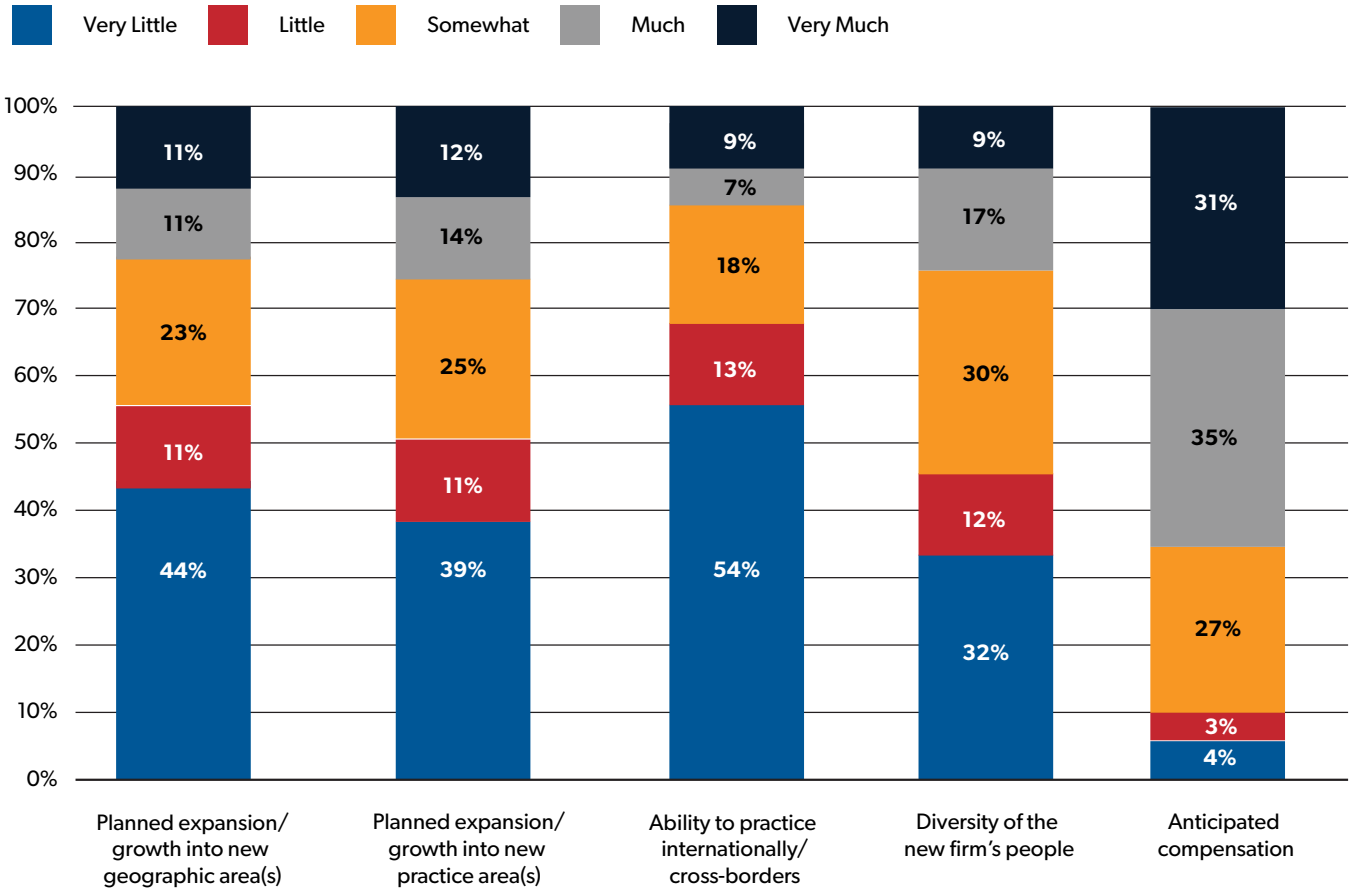


Table >>>

Table 8 - Q18. How Much of a Consideration Were These Factors for Joining Your Current Firm?

	Total	Satisfaction		Gender		Ethnicity				
		Satisfied	Not satisfied	Male	Female	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian Pacific	Mixed races
Planned expansion into new geography	2.4	2.4	2.2	2.4	2.3	2.4	2.2	2.5	2.5	2.6
Planned exp. in new practice area	2.5	2.5	2.4	2.4	2.5	2.4	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.3
Ability to practice internationally	2.1	2.0	2.1	2.1	2.0	2.0	1.6	2.6	2.2	1.5
Diversity of new firm people	2.6	2.6	2.2	2.3	3.2	2.5	3.3	3.0	3.3	2.5
Anticipated compensation	3.9	3.9	4.0	3.9	3.9	3.9	4.1	4.3	3.9	3.2
Base	1,126	968	160	773	321	890	35	40	63	17

KEY FINDINGS

- Earlier in the Report we saw that anticipated compensation trailed well behind the importance of the firm's ability to support the lateral partner's practice, firm culture, the firm's financial health and other factors when choosing a new firm (See Figure 4). Question 18 took a slightly different tack, asking respondents how much of a consideration certain factors were in choosing their current firm over any other or remaining at their prior firm. Here, we see that anticipated compensation is considered far more than a firm's expansion plans, international opportunities or diversity.
- Of course, some groups weighed these factors more heavily than others. Litigation lawyers placed more weight on a firm's plans for geographic and practice area expansion while corporate and IP lawyers were more likely to consider opportunities to practice internationally.
- Notably, the ability to practice internationally was not important to lawyers aged 30-39, a reverse in position from the previous report in 2020, which might be a side effect from the pandemic. Interestingly, those aged 40-60 were more likely to desire the ability to practice internationally.
- Younger lawyers, aged 30-39, placed higher importance on anticipated compensation and planned expansion by the firm.
- Lateral partners from underrepresented backgrounds were more heavily influenced by diversity.

J. COMPENSATION GUARANTEE

Question 19 addressed whether respondents' compensation was guaranteed and, if so, for what length of time. Figure 9 sets forth the breakdown among the 1,132 respondents. Table 9 sets forth the breakdown of responses sorted by gender, ethnicity and overall satisfaction.

Figure >>>

Figure 9 - Q19. Was Your Compensation Guaranteed for a Minimum Period?

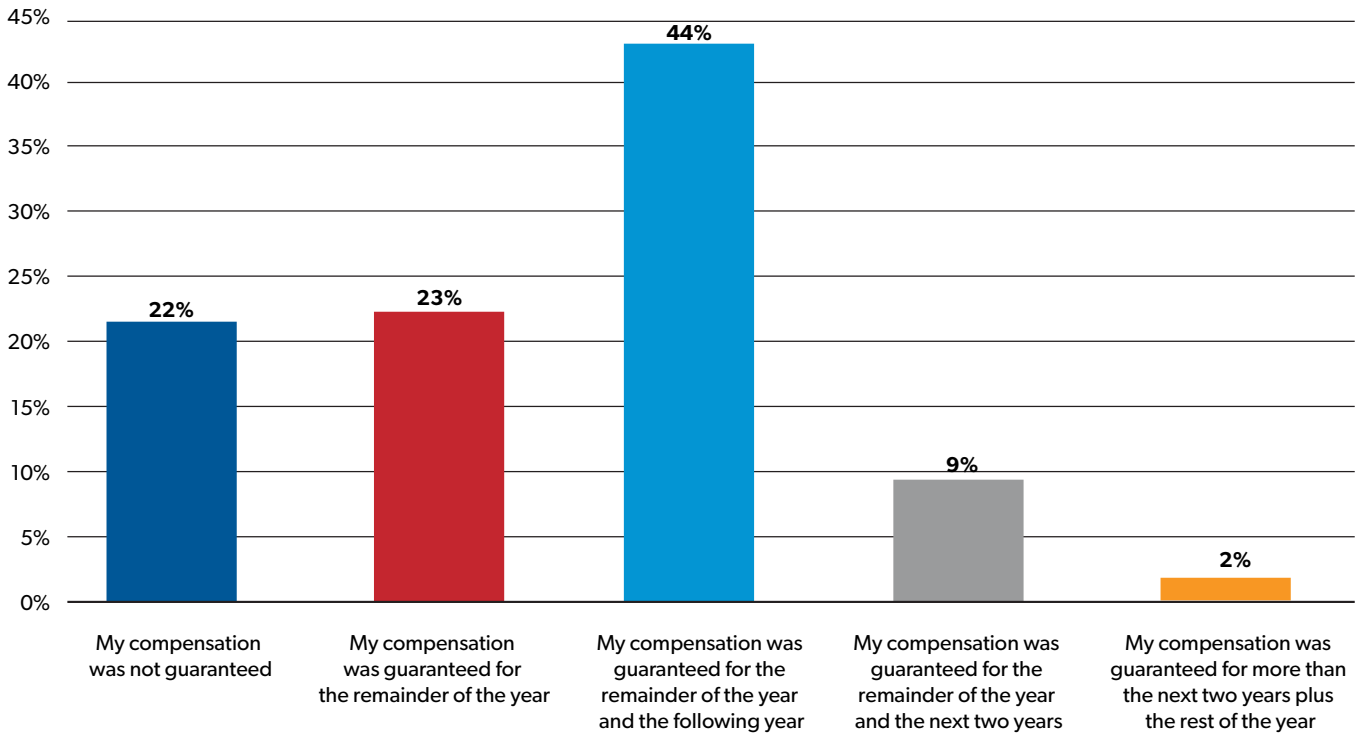


Table 9 - Q19. Was Your Compensation Guaranteed for a Minimum Period?

	Total	Satisfaction		Gender		Ethnicity				
		Satisfied	Not satisfied	Male	Female	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian Pacific	Mixed races
Not guaranteed	22%	22%	26%	24%	18%	22%	11%	35%	19%	12%
Guaranteed remainder of the year	23%	23%	23%	23%	23%	23%	26%	15%	21%	24%
Guaranteed for the remainder of the year and the following year	44%	44%	41%	43%	46%	43%	49%	30%	53%	47%
Guaranteed for the remainder of the year and the next 2 years	9%	9%	8%	9%	9%	9%	9%	15%	7%	12%
Guaranteed for more than the next 2 years plus the rest of the year	2%	2%	2%	2%	4%	2%	6%	5%	0%	6%
Base	1132	968	160	773	321	890	35	40	62	17

Key Findings >>>

KEY FINDINGS

- **Seventy-eight percent of all respondents received some form of compensation guarantee** (up from 74% in 2020).Twenty-three percent of respondents reported their compensation being guaranteed only for the remainder of the year they joined their new firm, with 43% receiving guarantees for the remainder of the year and the following year. Only 9% (10% in 2020) received guaranteed compensation for the remainder of the year and for the next two years and **only 2% of all lateral partners received a guarantee for more than two years plus the balance of the current year.**
    - The advantage to a firm of a brief guarantee (stub year, or stub plus one year) is that it allows the firm sufficient time to set the lateral partner's more permanent level of remuneration (by awarding points or shares or setting base compensation level) after having seen how the lateral and his or her practice have fit into the firm.
    - From the lateral partners' perspective, the advantage is that (a) there is some degree of certainty in the transition, and (b) they do not run the risk that the firm will slot them in initially at too low a level out of fear that things might not work out. The interim period allows lateral partners an opportunity to prove themselves and ensure that they are slotted in fairly and appropriately.
- Hispanic partners reported multi-year guarantees (two or more years plus the stub year) at a much higher rate than average (20% vs 11%) but also had a far higher rate of not having any guarantee at all (35% vs 27% for all lateral partners). Put another way, Hispanic lateral partners were far less likely to have a short-term guarantee – only 45% had assurances for the stub year or stub plus one year, vs 66% of all lateral partners.
- Black partners were more likely to receive some measure of compensation guarantee (89% vs. 78% for all lateral partners).
- Compensation guarantees were somewhat important to lateral partners who moved firms within the last year. Only 12% of these partners did not have some measure of guaranteed compensation (vs 22% for the overall group).
- **Guarantees, or their absence, were not materially different for Satisfied lateral partners versus Unsatisfied laterals.** Perhaps this disproves the old saying, "Money is not the key to happiness, but if you have enough money, you can get one of those keys made."

Integration & Satisfaction >>>

INTEGRATION & SATISFACTION

A. EFFECTIVENESS OF INTEGRATION

In Question 17, respondents were asked to rate the effectiveness of their new firm's integration efforts across several areas, namely:

- Firm's overall efforts to integrate them into the partnership
- Cross-selling them to firm clients
- Cross-selling the firm's other services to their clients
- Communicating the firm's expectations to them
- Eliciting their expectations about the firm

Between 1,156 and 1,161 people responded to each component of the question. Figure 10 sets forth the mean average score given by these respondents, where a score of 5 indicated the firm's efforts were 'very effective' and a score of 1 indicated 'very ineffective' efforts in that area. Also shown are comparisons with results from the 2020, 2014, 2006 and 1996 Surveys. Table 10 sets forth the breakdown of responses to the 2023 Survey sorted by gender, ethnicity and overall satisfaction.

Figure 10 - Q17. Historical Effectiveness of Integration

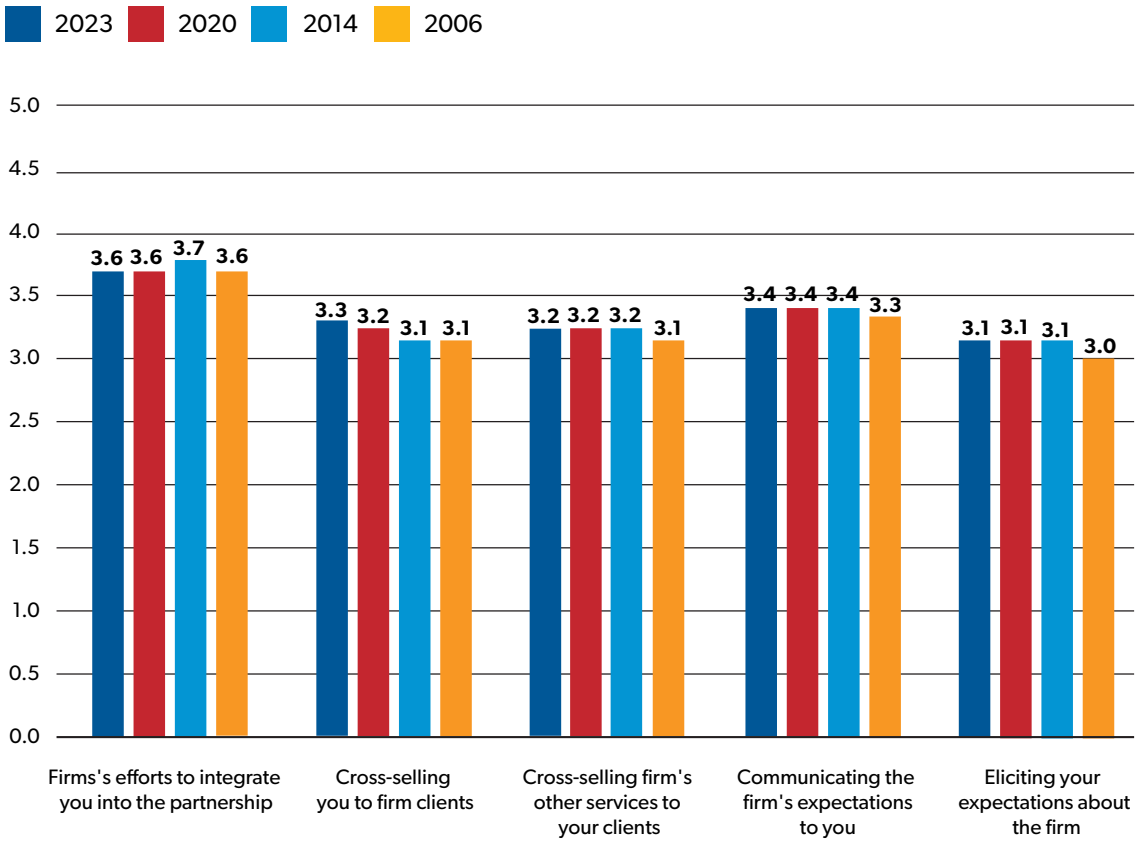
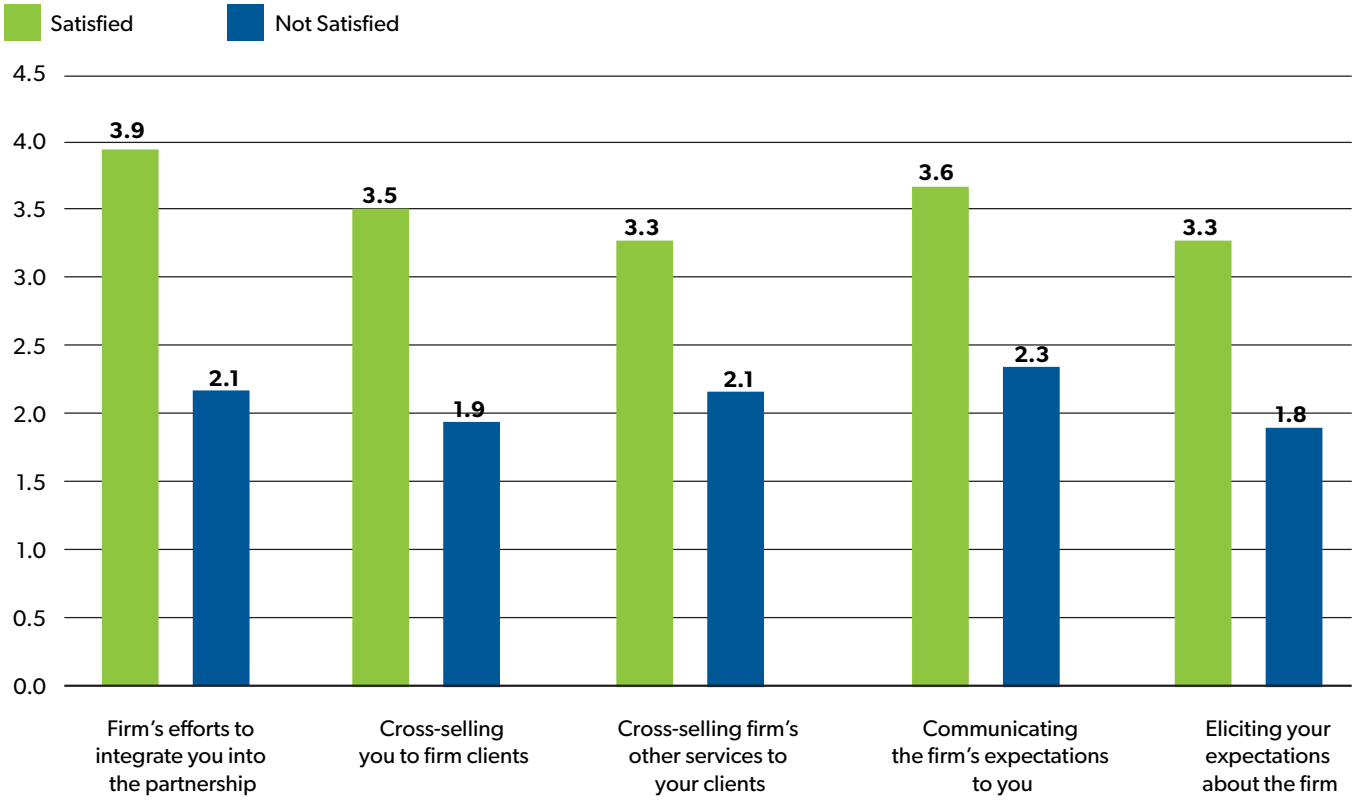


Table >>>

Table 10 - Q17. Impact of Integration on Satisfaction

	Total	Satisfaction		Gender		Ethnicity				
		Satisfied	Not satisfied	Male	Female	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian Pacific	Mixed races
Firm's efforts to integrate you into the partnership	3.6	3.9	2.1	3.7	3.6	3.7	3.1	3.2	3.5	3.6
Cross-selling you to firm clients	3.2	3.5	1.9	3.2	3.3	3.3	3.0	3.2	3.2	3.2
Cross-selling firm's other services to your clients	3.2	3.3	2.1	3.2	3.1	3.2	2.8	3.2	3.0	3.1
Communicating the firm's expec-tations to you	3.4	3.6	2.3	3.4	3.3	3.4	3.1	3.6	3.3	3.4
Eliciting your expec-tations about the firm	3.1	3.3	1.8	3.1	3.1	3.1	2.7	3.2	3.1	3.0
Total	1161	966	160	772	321	889	35	40	63	17

Figure 10a - Impact of Integration on Satisfaction



The third part of this Survey – how effectively firms integrate lateral partners into the culture and business of the partnership – found its genesis in our experience that often the most unhappy lateral partners were those whose firms failed to make them true partners with a stake in the enterprise other than a purely financial one. Without common ties of some kind and lacking a long common history of "thick and thin" that traditionally helped to bind partners together, it can otherwise be tempting to abandon ship at the first sign of stormy weather.

A score of less than 3 indicates that a firm has been ineffective in a particular aspect of integration. **Partners whose new firms made the most effective efforts to integrate them into the firm and its culture (including the non-business aspects of making a newcomer feel "part of the family") were most likely to register overall satisfaction with their move** (see Figure 10a). Conversely, firms that failed to make effective efforts at such integration generally produced less satisfied lateral partner responses.

Lateral partners today largely view their new firms as having been effective in integrating them, along all five measurements of integration utilized in this study. This continues the trend from 2020 and 2014 and represents a welcome and dramatic improvement from the woeful assessment in 1996, when lateral partners indicated that law firms were less than effective in four out of the five areas of integration.

This marked improvement is not accidental. Over the last quarter century managing partners and firm chairs have come to appreciate the critical importance of integrating lateral partners, and continually seek out specific suggestions for programs to ensure or improve integration. No well-run law firm today would simply show a lateral his or her office and say, "here's the copier, here's your assistant, check in with us quarterly and let us know how you're doing" (as one firm did to one of our candidates in the early '90s). A number of respected consultants now work with law firms to devise and implement robust integration programs that are more than just a checklist and lip service. Many firms have dedicated a high-level (and well-compensated) professional to shepherd new recruits along the path to full integration and effective cross-selling. Firm leaders have come to understand that many millions of dollars in revenue – and the perceived stability of their firms – depend upon each lateral feeling embraced rather than shoved through a revolving door.

KEY FINDINGS

- As Figure 10a makes glaringly evident, **there is a striking correlation between ineffective integration and low satisfaction, and between effective integration and high satisfaction,** on each of the factors weighed by lateral partners as well as in their overall satisfaction.
- Firms are less effective at cross-selling efforts and communicating mutual expectations.
- **Integration efforts between genders have finally begun to achieve greater parity.** The 2023 results indicate that 30% of females felt integration had been "very effective" compared to a similar 32% of males. Only 9% of females (8% of males) believed the firm had been "very ineffective" in integrating them into the partnership, while in 2020, female partners were far more likely (13%) than males (6%) to reach that conclusion.
- Partners who moved firms in the last year rated their firm's integration efforts higher than partners who joined before them. Understandably, firms tend to focus integration efforts primarily on lateral partners who have joined most recently.
- Lateral partners from ethnically diverse backgrounds generally experienced less effective integration efforts. For example, only 17% of Black partners and 19% of Asian Pacific partners rated their firms' integration efforts into the partnership as "very effective," while 33% of their White counterparts rated them thus.
- Likewise, Black (9%) and Asian Pacific partners (16%) were less likely to rate their firms' efforts at communicating expectations as "very effective" compared their White counterparts (20%).

B. EFFECT ON ORIGINATIONS AND COMPENSATION OF A LATERAL MOVE

Question 22 asked respondents whether their originations have increased, decreased, or remained about the same since joining their current firm. Figure 11 sets forth the breakdown among the 1,118 respondents. Table 11 sets forth the breakdown of responses sorted by gender, ethnicity and overall satisfaction.

Figure 11 – Q22. Since Joining, Have Your Originations Increased/Decreased?

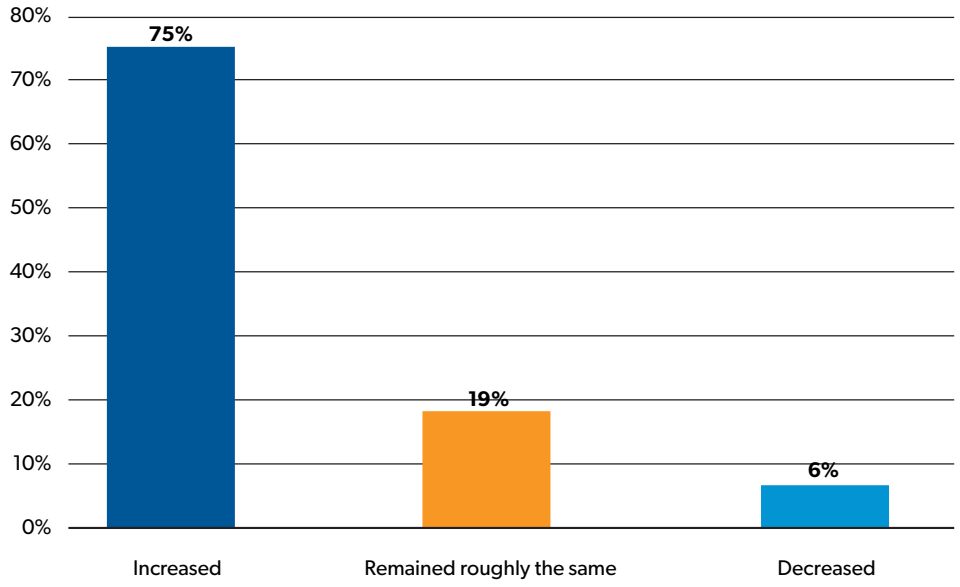


Table 11 – Q22. Since Joining, Have Your Originations Increased/Decreased?

	Total	Satisfaction		Gender		Ethnicity				
		Satisfied	Not satisfied	Male	Female	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian Pacific	Mixed races
Increased 1-10%	14%	15%	9%	13%	18%	12%	20%	21%	29%	24%
Increased 11-20%	15%	15%	15%	16%	12%	15%	14%	21%	10%	6%
Increase 21-30%	8%	8%	10%	8%	9%	9%	11%	5%	2%	18%
Increased more than 30%	38%	40%	29%	40%	36%	39%	23%	33%	37%	24%
Remained roughly the same	19%	18%	22%	18%	20%	19%	23%	18%	21%	18%
Decreased	6%	4%	17%	6%	6%	6%	9%	3%	3%	12%
Base:	1118	954	158	766	315	878	35	39	63	17

KEY FINDINGS

- **Seventy-five percent of lateral partners increased their originations since joining their new firm, while only 6% decreased.** This represents a modest improvement from the already auspicious results from 2020, when 67% increased their originations and 10% decreased.

- Not surprisingly, and as was the case in 2020, a much greater percentage of the partners who were Unsatisfied with their move had experienced a decrease in their originations than those who were Satisfied (17% vs 4%). Sixty-three percent of those who were Unsatisfied enjoyed an increase in business compared to 78% of those who were Satisfied.
- **Roughly the same percentage of male and female partners enjoyed an increase in originations.** Overall, gender had a limited impact on changes in originations.

Question 20 asked what level of originations the lateral had projected for their first full year after the move, and Question 21 asked what their originations actually were. 1,124 respondents answered Question 20 and 1,112 respondents answered Question 21. Figures 11a and 11b set forth the breakdown among all respondents. Tables 11a and 11b set forth the breakdown of responses sorted by gender, ethnicity and overall satisfaction.

Figure 11a – Q20. Projected Level of Originations Expected First Full Year with Firm

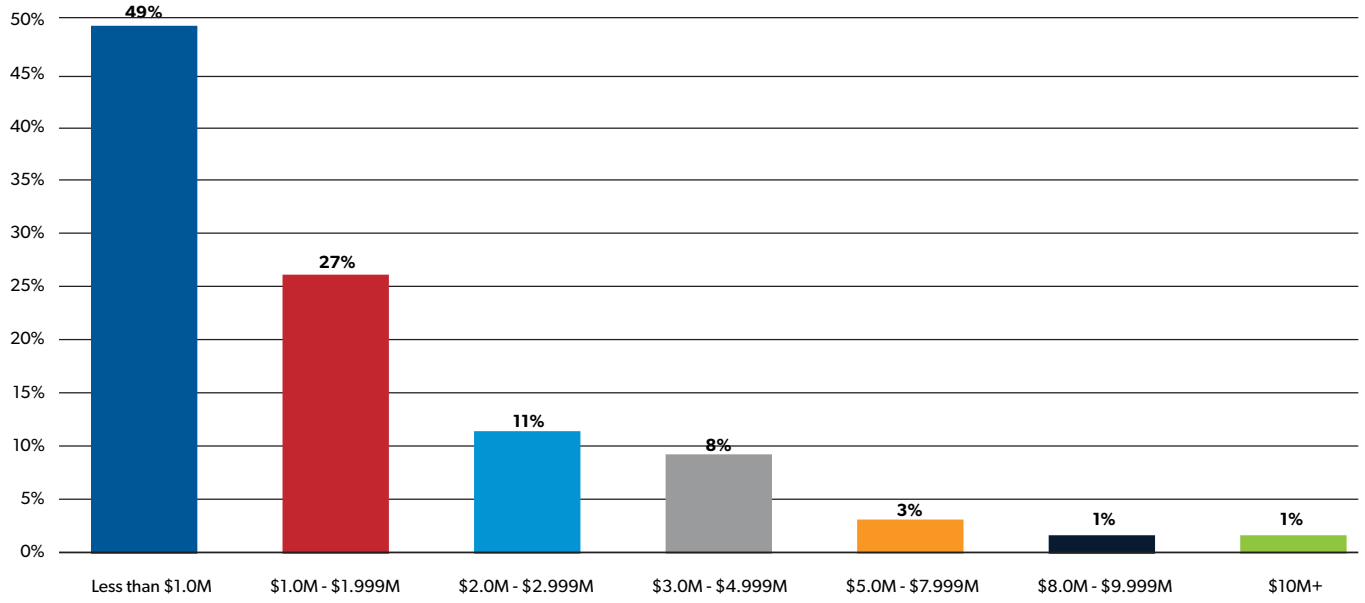


Figure 11b – Q21. Actual Level of Originations First Full Year with Firm

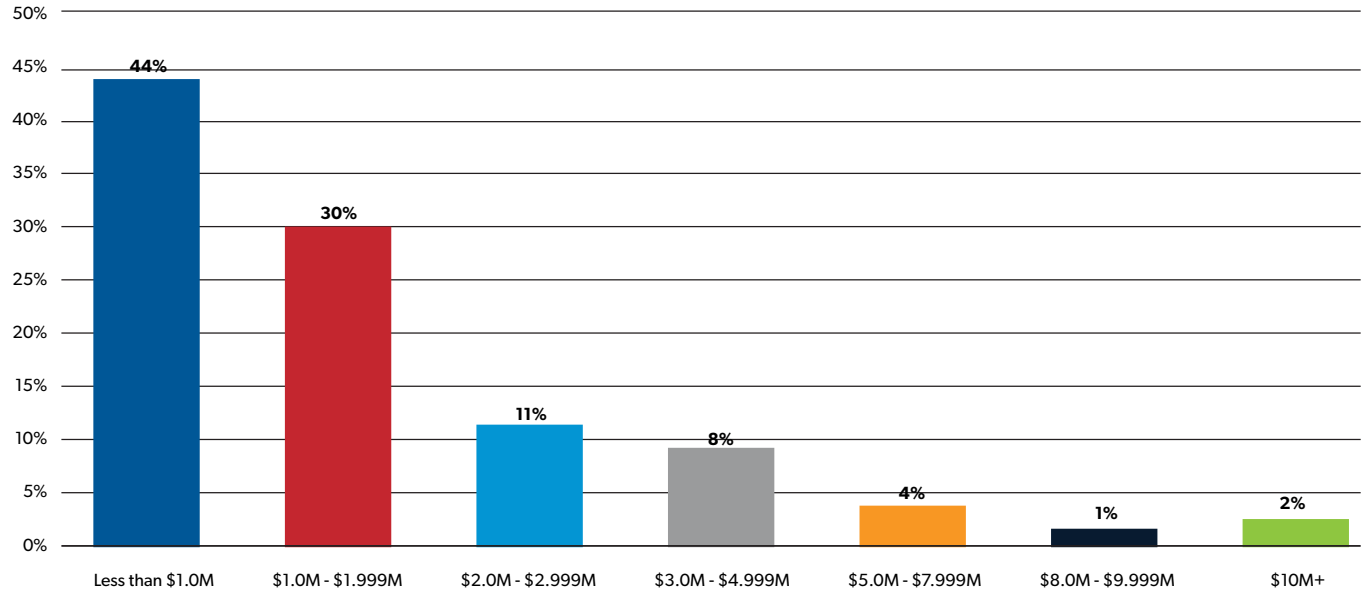


Table >>>

Table 11a– Q20. Projected Level of Originations Expected First Full Year with Firm

	Total	Satisfaction		Gender		Ethnicity				
		Satisfied	Not satisfied	Male	Female	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian Pacific	Mixed races
Less than $1.0M	49%	49%	52%	44%	61%	48%	60%	49%	49%	47%
$1.0M - $1.999M	27%	28%	24%	29%	23%	27%	31%	21%	35%	24%
$2.0M - $2.999M	11%	11%	13%	13%	8%	12%	6%	13%	6%	12%
$3.0M - $4.999M	8%	7%	8%	9%	4%	8%	3%	10%	6%	12%
$5.0M - $7.999M	3%	3%	2%	4%	3%	4%	0%	5%	2%	0%
$8.0M - $9.999M	1%	1%	1%	1%	<1%	1%	0%	0%	2%	6%
$10M or more	1%	1%	0%	1%	1%	1%	0%	3%	0%	0%
Base	1,124	959	159	767	319	883	35	39	63	17

Table 11b – Q21 Actual Level of Originations First Full Year with Firm

	Total	Satisfaction		Gender		Ethnicity				
		Satisfied	Not satisfied	Male	Female	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian Pacific	Mixed races
Less than $1.0M	44%	44%	46%	40%	56%	44%	60%	44%	52%	29%
$1.0M - $1.999M	30%	31%	29%	32%	26%	30%	29%	31%	29%	47%
$2.0M - $2.999M	11%	11%	13%	12%	10%	12%	6%	13%	6%	6%
$3.0M - $4.999M	8%	8%	7%	9%	5%	8%	3%	5%	6%	12%
$5.0M - $7.999M	4%	3%	5%	5%	2%	4%	3%	5%	3%	0%
$8.0M - $9.999M	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	0%	0%	2%	6%
$10M or more	2%	2%	1%	2%	1%	2%	0%	3%	2%	0%
Base	1,112	948	158	759	315	872	35	39	63	17

KEY FINDINGS

- **In comparing the responses to Questions 20 and 21, 73% of laterals correctly predicted their originations for the first year within the ranges set forth above. Of the remainder, 18% achieved higher originations than projected and 9% fell short of their expectations.**
- Similar proportions of male (77%) and female (74%) respondents saw originations increase.

Question 25 asked respondents whether their compensation changed in the three years since joining their current firm, and to what extent. Figure 11c sets forth the breakdown among the 1,028 respondents. Table 11c sets forth the breakdown of responses sorted by gender, ethnicity and overall satisfaction.

Figure 11c– Q25. In the Three Years After You Joined Your Current Firm, Did Your Compensation:

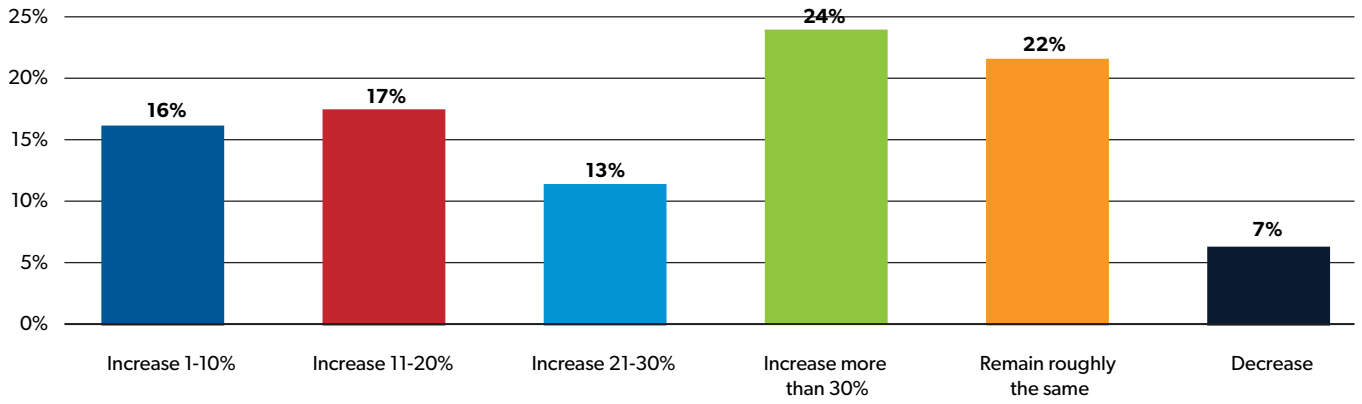


Table 11c – Q25 In the Three Years After You Joined Your Current Firm, Did Your Compensation:

	Total	Satisfaction		Gender		Ethnicity				
		Satisfied	Not satisfied	Male	Female	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian Pacific	Mixed races
Increase 1-10%	16%	16%	20%	14%	22%	15%	17%	18%	15%	7%
Increase 11-20%	17%	18%	13%	16%	19%	17%	7%	15%	15%	20%
Increase 21-30%	13%	14%	10%	14%	11%	14%	10%	6%	10%	20%
Increase more than 30%	24%	27%	12%	27%	18%	25%	7%	18%	35%	13%
Remain roughly the same	22%	22%	25%	22%	23%	22%	37%	27%	19%	33%
Decrease	7%	5%	21%	7%	7%	7%	23%	15%	6%	7%
Base	1028	874	151	714	283	818	30	33	52	15

KEY FINDINGS

- **In the three years after joining a new firm, fully 71% of lateral partners have seen an increase in compensation, with less than one in ten (7%) seeing a decrease.**
- **Twenty-four percent of all lateral partners increased their compensation by more than 30%.** The reasons for this can vary. For some, it may indicate that they were not realizing their market value at their prior firm, or not being fairly credited for originations for which they were in fact responsible. For others, a stronger or more apt platform may have enabled them to materially expand their practices. And for others still, they may simply be able to add greater value at their new firm – for example, a partner who was 8th in the pecking order at Firm A but now becomes a practice leader at Firm B and can grow the group and client base in an area where the firm was not previously active.

- As one might expect, those **individuals who enjoyed the greatest increases in compensation had a strong positive correlation with their satisfaction.** Conversely, a decrease in compensation strongly correlates with decreased satisfaction and a higher proportion who would have chosen another firm in hindsight.
- **Female partners were more likely than male partners to see a smaller (1-10%) bump in pay and far less likely (18% for women and 27% of men) to see an increase of 30% or more in compensation.** This is the case even though similar proportions of male and female partners had seen an increase of 30% or more in originations. For a more extended discussion of some of the reasons that may explain pay disparity between male and female partners, see Major, Lindsey & Africa's **2022 Partner Compensation Survey** by Jeffrey Lowe.
- For the majority who have seen an increase in compensation, the most likely driver (for most partners, and in most non-lockstep firms) is an increase in revenues originated and/or generated.
- Thirty-six percent of lateral partners in Miami and 32% of lateral partners in Silicon Valley saw an increase in compensation of 30% or more, perhaps reflecting the status of those two locales as "flavor of the moment" for out-of-town firms seeking to open or grow offices there.

C. OVERALL SATISFACTION

Question 23 asked respondents to rate their overall satisfaction with their current firm. Figure 12 sets forth the breakdown among the 1,128 respondents. Table 12 sets forth the breakdown of responses sorted by the following categories: (i) gender; (ii) ethnicity; (iii) number of lateral moves; (iv) practice area; (v) search time length; (vi) respondents who singled out compensation as a reason to move versus those that did not; (vii) respondents who reviewed the firm lease, loan documents and other financial statements versus those that did not; (viii) respondents who moved alone versus those that moved as part of a group or merger; and (ix) respondents who received compensation guarantees versus those that did not.

Figure 12: Q23. What is Your Overall Satisfaction with Your Current Firm?

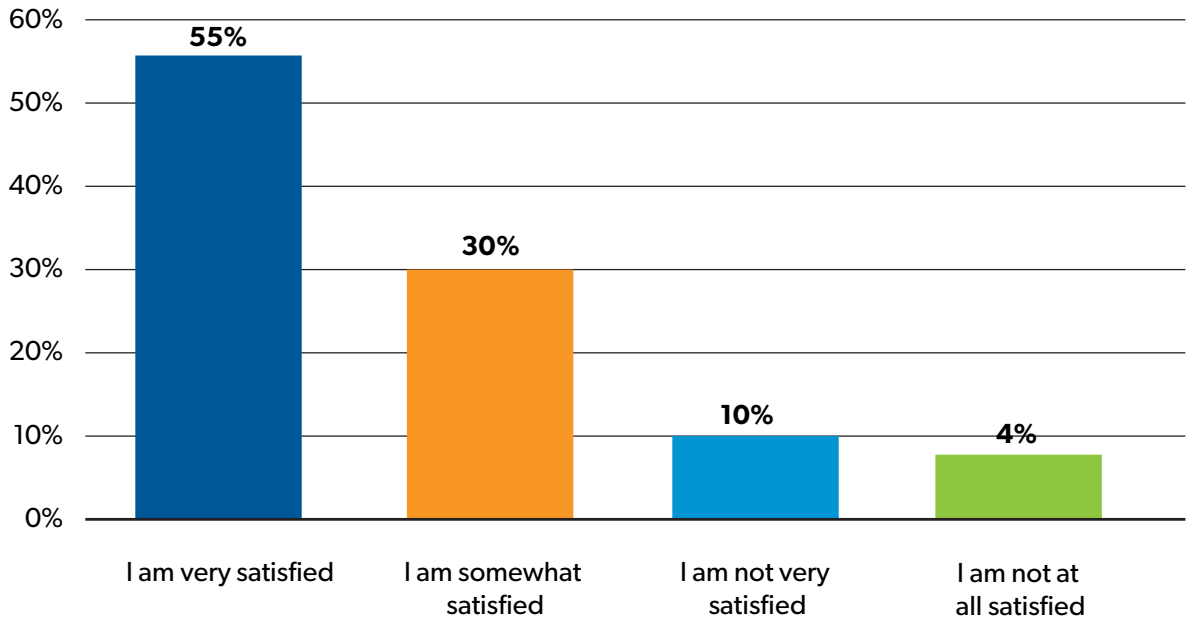


Table >>>

Table 12 – Q23. What is Your Overall Satisfaction with Your Current Firm?

		Base	I am very satisfied	I am somewhat satisfied	I am not very satisfied	I am not at all satisfied
Total		1,128	55%	30%	10%	4%
Gender	Male	771	57%	31%	9%	4%
	Female	320	53%	30%	11%	5%
Ethnicity	White	887	57%	30%	10%	4%
	Black	35	46%	37%	11%	6%
	Hispanic	40	58%	20%	13%	10%
	Asian Pacific	63	51%	38%	10%	2%
	Mixed Races	17	53%	29%	6%	12%
# Lateral moves	1	703	56%	31%	9%	3%
	2	239	57%	28%	11%	4%
	3	114	52%	26%	14%	8%
	4	40	58%	30%	10%	3%
	5+	22	36%	41%	14%	9%
Practice area	Corporate	215	59%	27%	9%	5%
	Tax/ERISA	108	60%	28%	9%	3%
	IP	69	48%	38%	9%	6%
	Litigation	247	52%	30%	15%	3%
	Real Estate	7	29%	14%	14%	43%
	Other	453	55%	33%	8%	4%
Search length	6 months or less	793	56%	30%	10%	4%
	More than 6 mos.	324	54%	31%	10%	6%
Reason for move	Compensation	437	57%	30%	10%	4%
	Not compensation	1060	56%	30%	10%	4%
Reviewed financials	Yes	215	60%	27%	8%	5%
	No	870	55%	31%	10%	4%
Move type	An individual partner	778	56%	31%	9%	4%
	Group/merger	350	55%	29%	12%	5%
Compensation guaranteed	My compen-sation was not guaranteed	251	58%	26%	13%	4%
	Guaranteed	874	55%	32%	9%	4%

Key Findings >>>

KEY FINDINGS

- **Eighty-six percent of all lateral partners were "Very satisfied" or "Somewhat satisfied" with the law firm they moved to;** 14% were "Not very satisfied" or "Not at all satisfied." These figures are eerily – some might say suspiciously – nearly identical to the figures from 2020 (86% and 14%) and 2014 (87% and 13%).
- **Partners who had moved five or more times were substantially less satisfied than the norm with their current firm.** Whether this suggests that a "grass is greener" philosophy is more prevalent among multiple "hoppers," or that some people are never happy no matter where they go, or something deeper, is unclear.
- Hispanic partners and those identifying as mixed ethnicity were more likely to be "not at all satisfied."
- Real estate was the only practice area where laterals were more likely to be Unsatisfied than Satisfied.
- **There was no strong correlation between the presence or length of a compensation guarantee and laterals' overall satisfaction with the firm.**

D. SATISFACTION WITH COMPENSATION

Question 24 asked respondents whether they were satisfied with their current compensation. 1,130 respondents answered this question. Figure 13 sets forth the breakdown among all respondents. Table 13 sets forth the breakdown of responses sorted by gender, ethnicity and overall satisfaction.

Figure 13 – Q24. What is Your Satisfaction with Your Current Compensation?

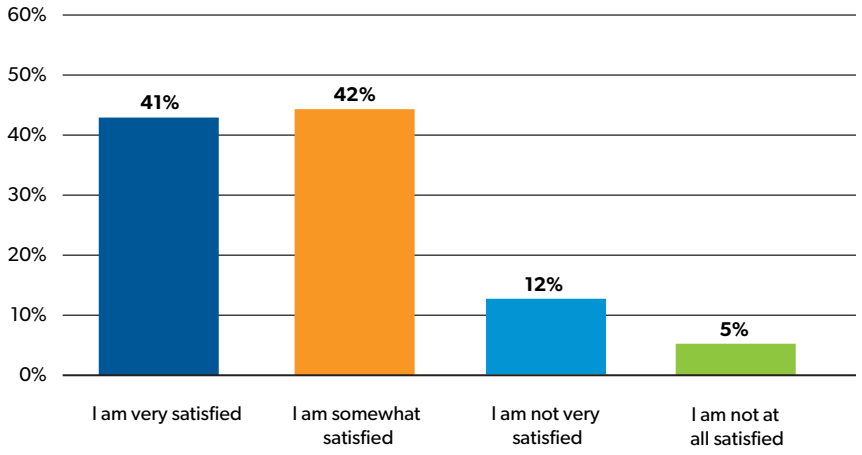


Table 13 - Q24. What is Your Satisfaction with Your Current Compensation?

	Total	Satisfaction		Gender		Ethnicity				
		Satisfied	Not satisfied	Male	Female	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian Pacific	Mixed races
I am very satisfied	41%	47%	8%	43%	39%	42%	43%	48%	37%	47%
I am somewhat satisfied	42%	45%	23%	42%	41%	42%	31%	33%	48%	41%
I am not very satisfied	12%	8%	39%	11%	13%	12%	20%	13%	11%	0%
I am not at all satisfied	5%	1%	31%	4%	7%	5%	6%	8%	5%	12%
Base	1130	968	160	772	321	889	35	40	63	17

Key Findings >>>

KEY FINDINGS

- **Eighty-three percent of all lateral partners were "Very satisfied" or "Somewhat satisfied" with their compensation** (82% in 2020 and 82% in 2014).
- Unsurprisingly, partners who were less satisfied in general with their current firm were also far less satisfied with their compensation. For many, this may have been a reflection of their practice not developing at the new firm to the extent they (and perhaps the firm) had anticipated. For others it may reflect the poor economic condition of the firm as a whole – again, a situation where the reality was less than the expectation.
- **Twenty-six percent of Black lateral partners expressed some dissatisfaction with their compensation ("Not very" and "Not at all satisfied"), substantially higher than the 16% figure for White partners.** In one relative bright spot, however, the 26% figure was dramatically lower in 2023 than the 38% total in 2020.
- Respondents who joined as equity partners continued to be somewhat more likely to be "very satisfied" with their compensation than non-equity partners (48% vs 34%).
- **Respondents in firms with a closed compensation system were less satisfied with compensation, and less satisfied overall with their current firm.** In addition, those in closed compensation systems were much less likely to have seen an increase in their compensation over three years after joining than those in open systems (74% of those in open systems, versus 64% in closed). Over a fifth of those who joined firms with closed compensation systems wish they had negotiated a better compensation package, and 19% wished they had spoken to more firms and done more due diligence. Finally, female lateral partners are somewhat more likely to join firms with closed compensation systems (36% vs 29% of men).

E. IF YOU HAD TO DO IT ALL OVER AGAIN?

In Question 26, respondents were asked if they had it to do all over again, would they have (i) stayed at their former firm; (ii) moved, but to a different firm or company; or (iii) moved to their current firm. 1,115 respondents answered this question. Figure 14 sets forth the breakdown among all respondents. Table 14 sets forth the breakdown of responses sorted by gender, ethnicity and overall satisfaction.

Figure 14 – Q26. If You Had It To Do All Over Again, What Would You Do?

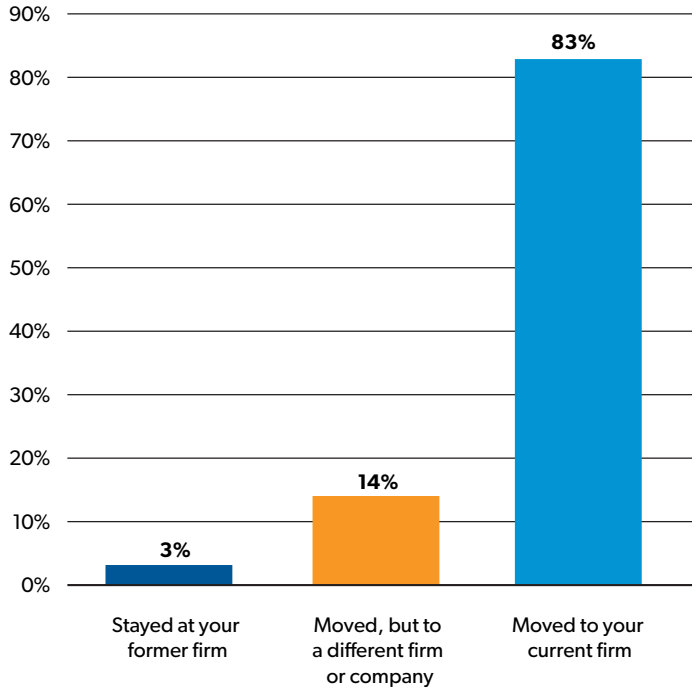


Table >>>

Table 14 - Q26. If You Had To Do It All Over Again, What Would You Do?

	Total	Satisfaction		Gender		Ethnicity				
		Satisfied	Not satisfied	Male	Female	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian Pacific	Mixed races
Stayed at your former firm	3%	1%	14%	3%	3%	2%	6%	8%	2%	6%
Moved, but to a different firm or company	14%	6%	62%	12%	18%	14%	26%	13%	6%	12%
Moved to your current firm	83%	93%	24%	85%	79%	84%	69%	80%	92%	82%
Base	1115	956	156	767	315	880	35	39	63	17

KEY FINDINGS

- **Eighty-three percent of all lateral partners, if they had it to do all over again, would still move to their current firm** rather than to another firm or company or stay at their old firm. (This is a slight increase from the 80% figure from 2020.) For all the talk among commentators about "revolving doors" and "churn," this might be a somewhat surprising statistic.
- **Twenty-four percent of the partners who were Unsatisfied with their current firm would, if they had it to do all over again, still move to their current firm.** Sixty-two percent of them wished they had gone to a different firm, suggesting that a subsequent move may be in the offing.
- Notably, very few overall (3%) wish they had stayed at their former firm. This figure aligns with the relative infrequency of reported "boomerangs" who leave a law firm and then return

F. FIRM'S CANDOR

Question 27 asked respondents to assess, in retrospect, how candid their current firm was about the opportunity to join the firm. 1,128 respondents answered this question. Figure 15 sets forth the breakdown among all respondents. Table 15 sets forth the breakdown of responses sorted by gender, ethnicity and overall satisfaction.

Figure 15 – Q27. How Candid Was the Firm About the Opportunity to Join?

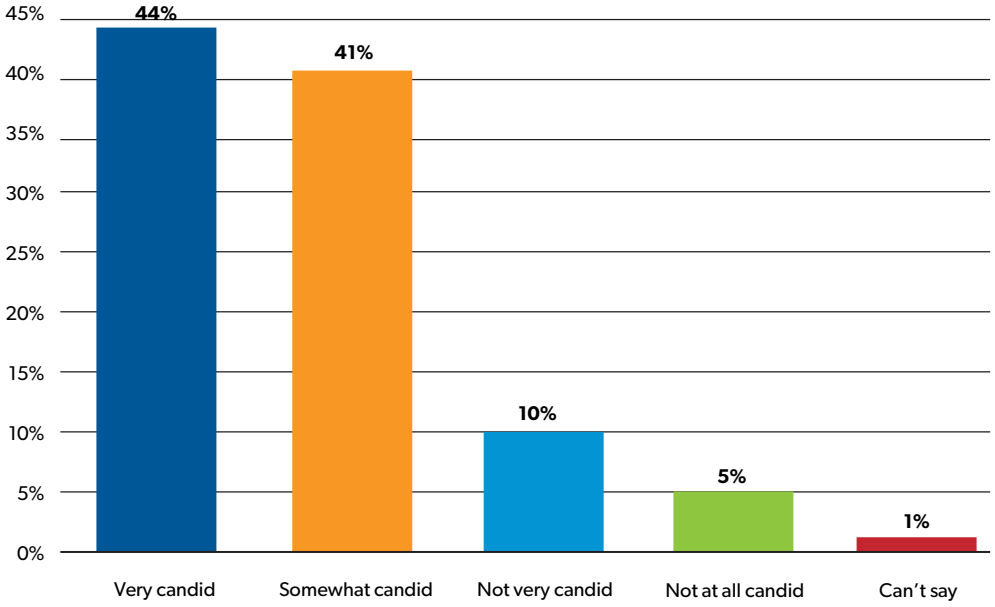


Table >>>

Table 15 – Q27. How Candid Was the Firm About the Opportunity to Join?

	Total	Satisfaction		Gender		Ethnicity				
		Satisfied	Not satisfied	Male	Female	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian Pacific	Mixed races
Very candid	44%	51%	3%	47%	36%	46%	17%	48%	35%	53%
Somewhat candid	41%	43%	29%	38%	48%	40%	60%	30%	57%	29%
Not very candid	10%	5%	39%	9%	11%	9%	14%	13%	6%	18%
Not at all candid	5%	1%	28%	5%	5%	5%	9%	10%	2%	0%
Can't say	1%	1%	3%	1%	1%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Base	1128	966	158	772	320	888	35	40	63	17

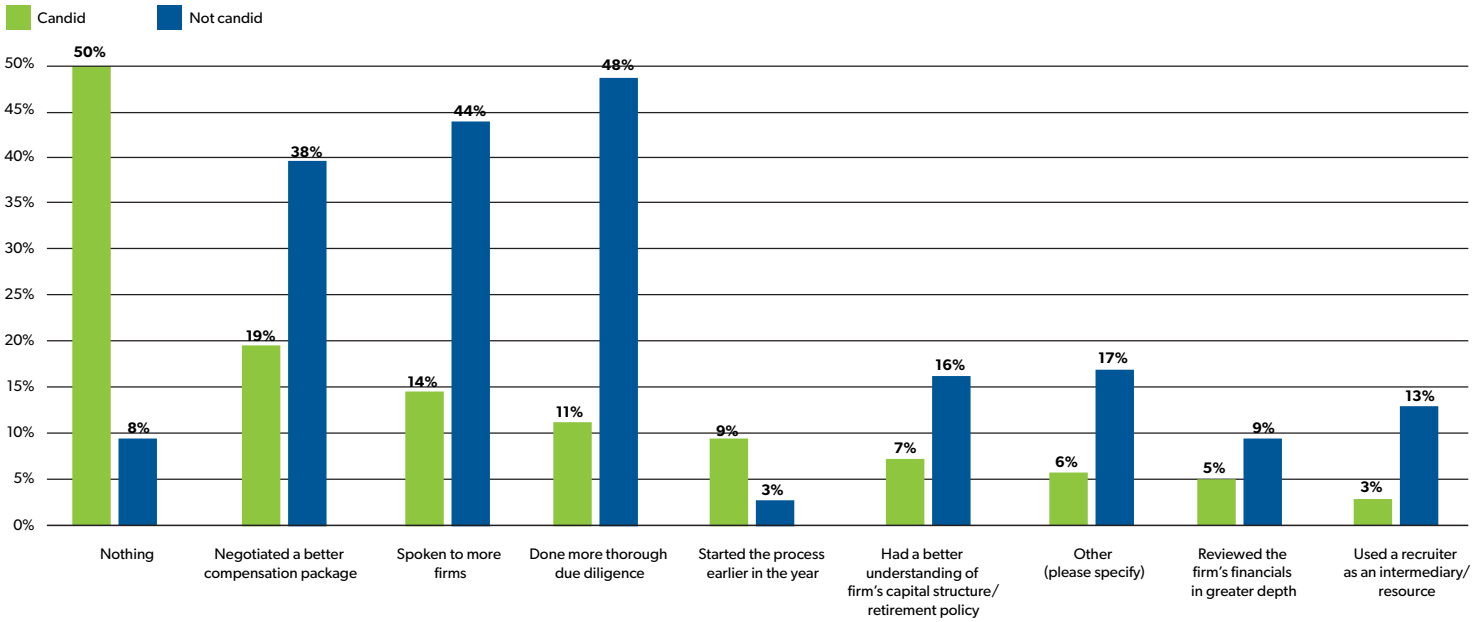
KEY FINDINGS

- **How candid a firm is during the recruitment process directly correlates with lateral partners' satisfaction.**
- **Ninety-four percent of partners who were Satisfied with their new professional homes – but only 31% of those who were Unsatisfied - felt that their firms had been very or somewhat candid** about the opportunity to join the firm (cross-selling or leadership opportunities, culture, finances, integration plan, billing expectations or otherwise). Once again, this brings us back to the ancient and venerable maxim, **"Satisfaction = Reality/Expectation"**. If lateral partners conclude that they were sold a bill of goods, they are far less likely to be Satisfied with the reality of their new professional home. The resentment that flows from a feeling that one's partners have not been candid, or that one was tricked into joining a firm, only compounds the problem.
- A total of 85% of all respondents felt their firms had been somewhat or very candid (In 2014, it was 88%). Whether all of this reflects a greater skepticism and cynicism in an age of "truth isn't truth" and "fake news," or whether firms are in fact somewhat less candid, is beyond the scope of this study.
- Only 17% of Black partners indicated that their firm was "very candid" – a distressing decrease from the already anemic 30% in 2020 and far less than the 46% figure for White lateral partners.
- **For lateral partners who felt their firm had been candid, 92% would make the same move again; where the firm was not viewed as candid only 29% would do it again.**
- Only 5% of lateral partners who wish they had done more due diligence believe their firm was "very candid."

Question 28 >>>

Question 28 asked "What, if anything, do you wish you had done differently as part of your search?" The responses to this question were particularly revealing in light of how much candor the lateral felt the firm had shown.

Figure 15a – Q28. Changes to Search Process and Firm Candor



- Where laterals felt their firm had been less than candid, they were twice as likely to wish they had negotiated a better compensation package, three times as likely to wish they had spoken to more firms, and four times as likely to wish they had used a recruiter as an intermediary and done more thorough due diligence.

Use of Search Firm >>>

USE OF SEARCH FIRM

A. USE OF SEARCH FIRM

Of the 1,128 respondents who answered Question 29, **44% stated that they used a search firm in connection with their lateral move**. In Question 29c, those respondents were asked whether their search firm performed one or more of the following functions for them:

- Prepare or assist in developing a practice profile and/or business plan
- Analyze the fit between your client base/practice area and the firm's
- Act as intermediary or otherwise assist in negotiations
- Provide detailed information about potential firms.

Figure 16 sets forth the breakdown among all respondents. Table 16 sets forth a breakdown of responses sorted by gender, ethnicity and overall satisfaction.

Figure 16 - Q29c. What Did Your Search Firm Do For You?

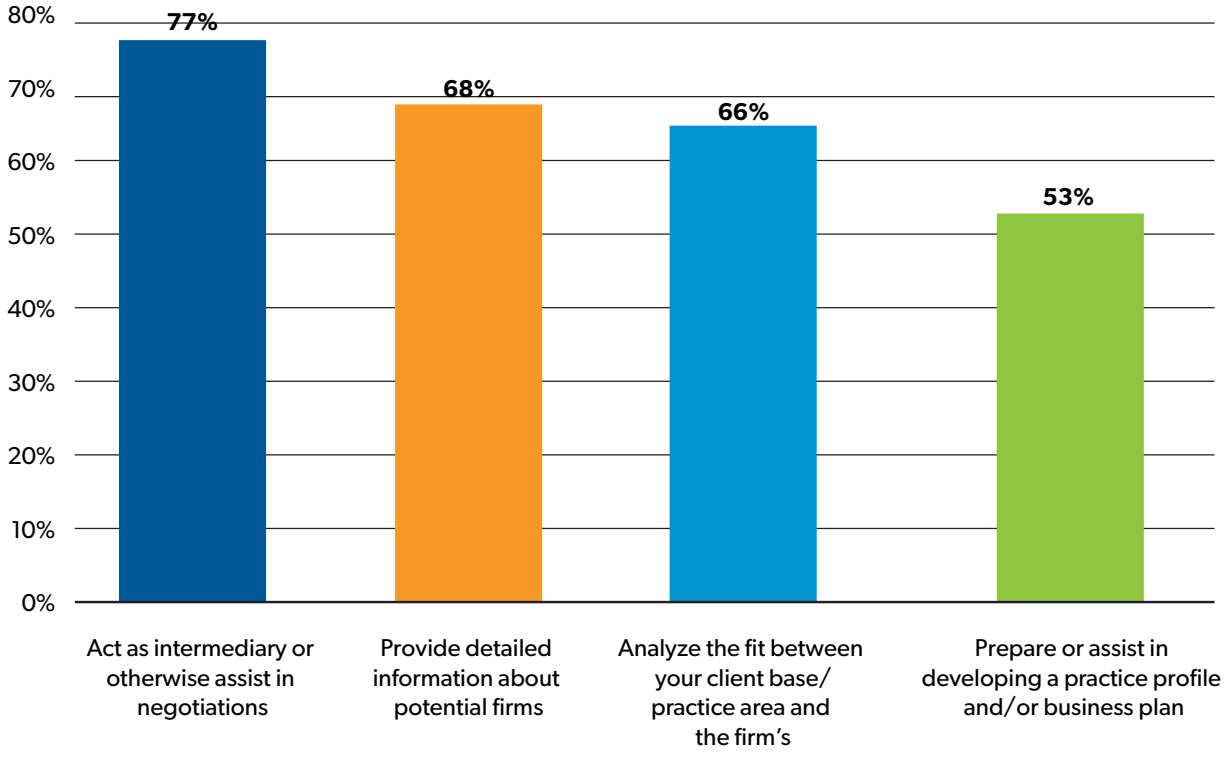


Table >>>

Table 16 - Q29c. What Did Your Search Firm Do For You?

	Total	Satisfaction		Gender		Ethnicity				
		Satisfied	Not satisfied	Male	Female	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian Pacific	Mixed races
Act as intermediary or otherwise assist in negotiations	77%	79%	69%	77%	76%	77%	84%	78%	89%	86%
Provide detailed information about potential firms	68%	68%	63%	72%	60%	67%	79%	61%	77%	86%
Analyze fit btw your client base / practice area & the firm's	66%	69%	48%	66%	67%	67%	84%	33%	77%	57%
Prepare or assist in developing a practice profile and/ or business plan	53%	55%	41%	57%	46%	53%	63%	39%	54%	57%
Base	487	414	71	341	134	385	19	18	26	7

KEY FINDINGS

- Having the assistance of a recruiter, by itself, did not materially impact a lateral partner's satisfaction with his or her new firm.
- Significantly, however, the provision of certain services by a recruiter consistently correlated with lateral partners' increased satisfaction with their move. **Where the search consultant was able to add real value, lateral partners were far more likely to be Satisfied with their move to a new firm.** This was, particularly the case around:
  - "Analyz[ing] the fit between [their] client base/practice area and the firm's" (69% for Satisfied lateral partners vs 48% for Unsatisfied).
  - "Prepar[ing] or assist[ing] in preparing a practice profile and/or business plan" (55% for Satisfied lateral partners compared to 41% for Unsatisfied. Compare this to 48% vs 39% in 2020).
- Conversely, Unsatisfied lateral partners were far less likely to have had a search consultant's assistance in the development of a practice profile or business plan, or to analyze the fit between the lateral's client base and that of the firm.
- Recent lateral partners (those who had moved within the last 3 years) were significantly more likely to have received search firm help in all these areas (49%, vs 39% among those who moved longer ago).
- A slightly higher percentage of respondents who worked with a search firm secured compensation guarantees (81% vs 76%).
- Lateral partners based in large metro areas used a search firm more often. Fully 70% of lateral partners based in Silicon Valley, 55% from Los Angeles, 53% from Washington D.C., and 53% based in the New York City metro areas used a search firm. 44% of lateral partners in total used a search firm.
- Fifty-four percent of Black lateral partners used a search firm versus 44% of their White counterparts.

B. SATISFACTION WITH SEARCH FIRM

Question 29d asked respondents to rate their overall satisfaction with their search firm. 488 respondents answered this question. Figure 17 sets forth the breakdown among all respondents. Table 17 also sets forth the breakdown of responses sorted by the following demographic categories: (i) gender; (ii) ethnicity; (iii) number of lateral moves; (iv) practice area; (v) search time length; (vi) respondents who singled out compensation as a reason to move versus those that did not; (vii) respondents who reviewed the firm lease, loan documents and other financial statements versus those that did not; (viii) respondents who moved alone versus those that moved as part of a group or merger; and (ix) respondents who received compensation guarantees versus those that did not.

Figure 17 - Q29d. How Satisfied Were You with the Assistance of Your Search Firm?

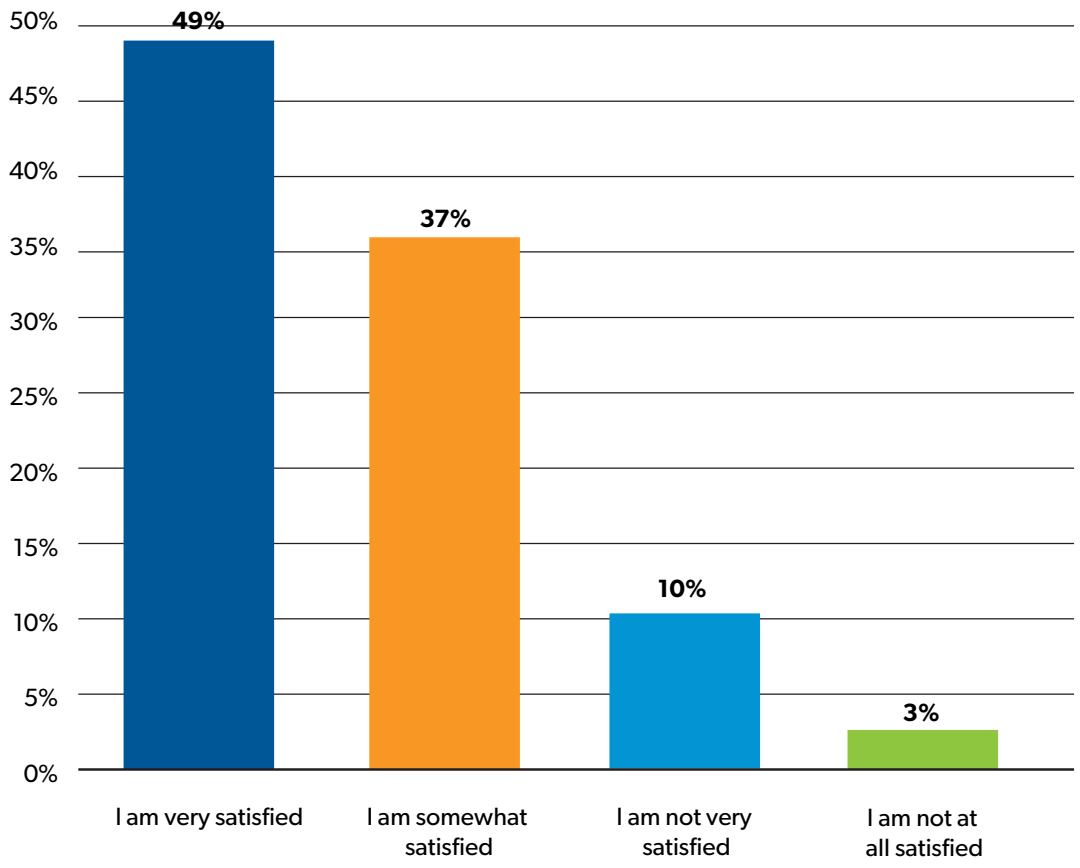


Table >>>

Table 17 - Q29d. How Satisfied Were You with the Assistance of Your Search Firm?

		Base	I was very satisfied	I was somewhat satisfied	I was not very satisfied	I was not at all satisfied
Total		488	49%	37%	10%	3%
Ethnicity	White, not Hispanic	386	50%	36%	10%	3%
	Black, not Hispanic	19	42%	47%	11%	0%
	Hispanic	18	33%	50%	11%	6%
	Asian Pacific, not Hispanic	26	62%	39%	0%	0%
	Mixed races	7	57%	29%	0%	0%
Gender	Male	342	49%	37%	9%	3%
	Female	134	49%	36%	10%	3%
Times moved laterally	1	288	49%	38%	10%	2%
	2	104	57%	33%	6%	3%
	3	65	37%	40%	14%	6%
	4	17	59%	29%	6%	0%
	5+	12	42%	50%	8%	0%
Practice area	Corporate	117	50%	39%	10%	1%
	Tax/ERISA	46	59%	37%	4%	0%
	IP	41	39%	42%	12%	5%
	Litigation	85	42%	41%	11%	5%
	Other total	185	49%	35%	10%	3%
Search length	0 to 6 mos.	323	51%	36%	9%	3%
	More than 6 mos.	163	45%	40%	12%	3%
Reason left firm	Compensation	211	49%	35%	11%	3%
	Not compensation	462	49%	38%	9%	3%
Reviewed financials	Yes	96	45%	43%	7%	3%
	No	476	49%	37%	10%	3%
Move type	An individu-al partner	363	52%	36%	9%	3%
	Part of a group/ merger	125	42%	40%	10%	2%
Compensation guaranteed	Not guaranteed	94	46%	35%	13%	3%
	Comp Guaranteed	394	50%	37%	9%	2%

Key Findings >>>

KEY FINDINGS

- **Eighty-six percent of respondents were satisfied ("very" or "somewhat") with the assistance of their search firm.** This percentage did not significantly vary with the length of search and is nearly identical to the figure in 2020.

- There was no material variation in satisfaction with the search firm whether compensation was guaranteed or not, whether compensation was a prime reason for a move, or whether the partner reviewed the firm's financials.
- Those who moved as part of a group were less likely to be "Very satisfied" with their search firm compared with those who moved as individuals – understandable, as the former group would be less likely to receive individualized counseling for their particular practice and needs.
- A higher proportion of Litigation partners were "Very satisfied" with the assistance of their recruiter than other lateral partners.

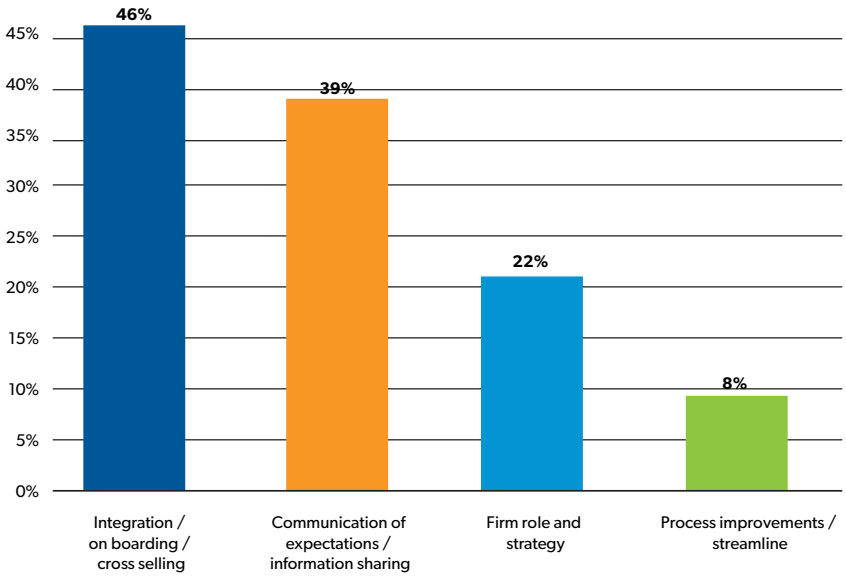
IV. REFLECTIONS ON THE LATERAL PARTNER PROCESS

At the end of the Survey, respondents were given the opportunity to answer two additional, open-ended questions about the search process. Question 38 asked respondents what part or parts of the lateral process, if any, they thought could be improved and 672 respondents gave their views on this question. Question 37 asked what advice they would give to another partner who was either considering or going through a lateral move and 731 respondents answered this question.

Figure 18 summarizes the main themes lateral partners highlighted. On the right are the detailed themes, with related sub-themes grouped into broader categories on the left.

The most commonly identified improvement focused on integration and onboarding. This included having an integration plan and an on-boarding plan and planning for smooth transfer of files.

Figure 18 - What Part(s) of the Lateral Process Can Be Improved?



The next area for improvement was communication, which includes setting clear, transparent expectations including targets and how progress will be measured and better information sharing on both sides. Just over one fifth felt that improvements in understanding – or being clear about – the firm's strategy and how the lateral fits is important. These are themes which are clearly top of mind and strongly link into other aspects of this Report, including the shortfall of communicating expectations (in both directions) and the critical importance of integration.

Figure 19 summarizes the main areas of advice lateral partners would give to another partner considering or going through a lateral move. For the most part, their advice is very well aligned with the various areas or sources of concern or dissatisfaction highlighted throughout this Report. With integration a paramount predictor or a lateral partner's happiness and success, many highlighted the need to seek out cross-selling opportunities.

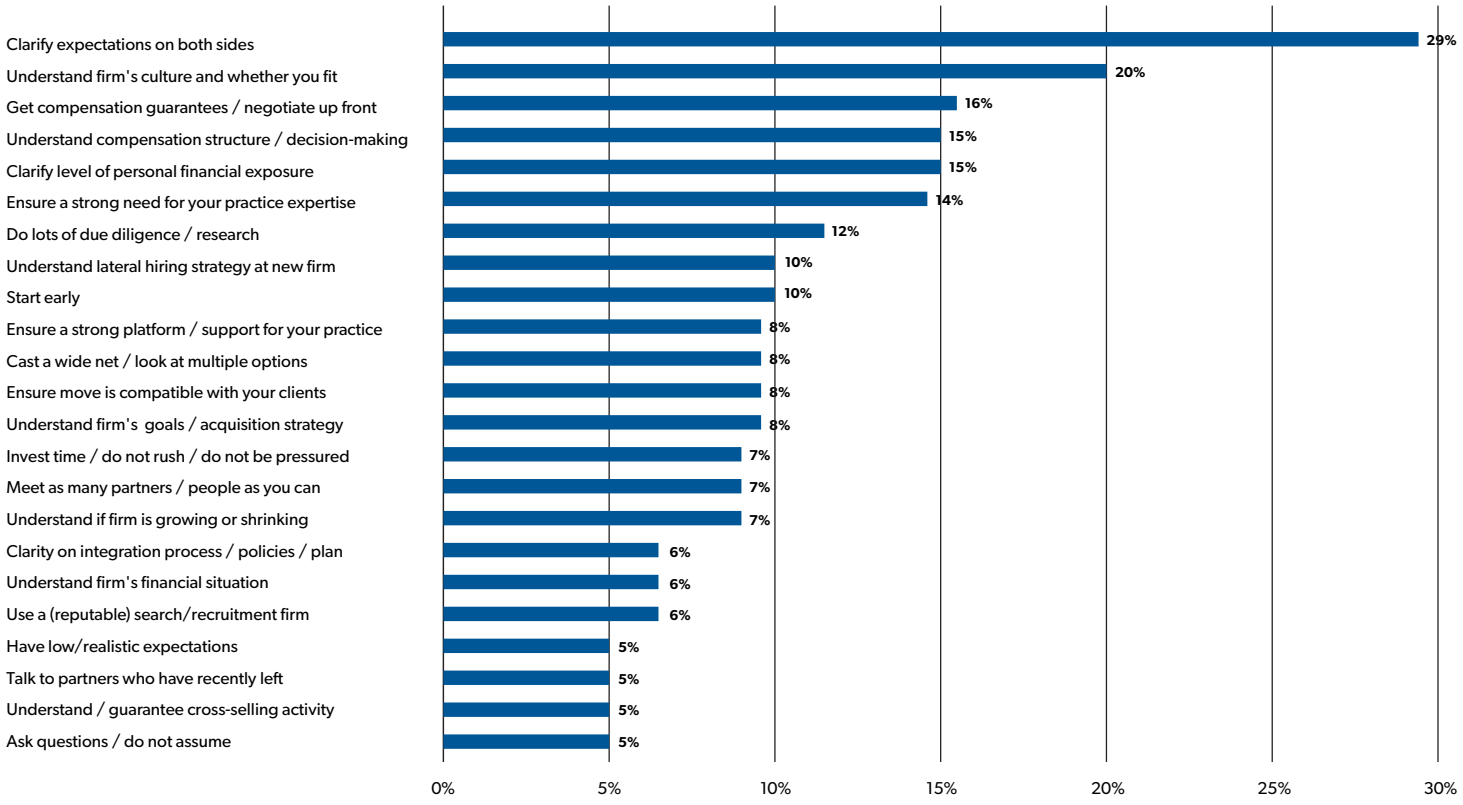
Based on the feedback, clarifying expectations on both sides is recommended for those considering a lateral move. Understanding a firm's culture and compensation structure were also pieces of crucial advice. To achieve both, potential lateral partners were advised by those who had made the move to:

- Take time to learn as much as possible about the new firm and check that there is a fit between the lateral partner and the strategy of the firm, including a need for the lateral partner's expertise.
- Meet as many partners (including recent lateral partners) who currently work at the firm, or worked there in the past, as you feasibly can.

Eight percent believe the process could be improved/streamlined, including improving the recruiter's role, client transfer and the interview and conflicts process.

Another common thread is thoroughness: gaining clarity on expectations of both sides, meeting as many people as possible (including recent lateral partners), asking about the firm's culture, understanding compensation structure and establishing how decisions are made. Often the message is to not be afraid to ask questions, not to make assumptions that can't be backed up with evidence, and to go into a move with the same degree of thoroughness as one would when representing a client.

Figure 19 - Q37. What Advice Would You Give Another Partner Considering a Lateral Move?



Continue >>>

INCLUDED BELOW ARE SELECT COMMENTS PROVIDED BY LATERAL PARTNERS:

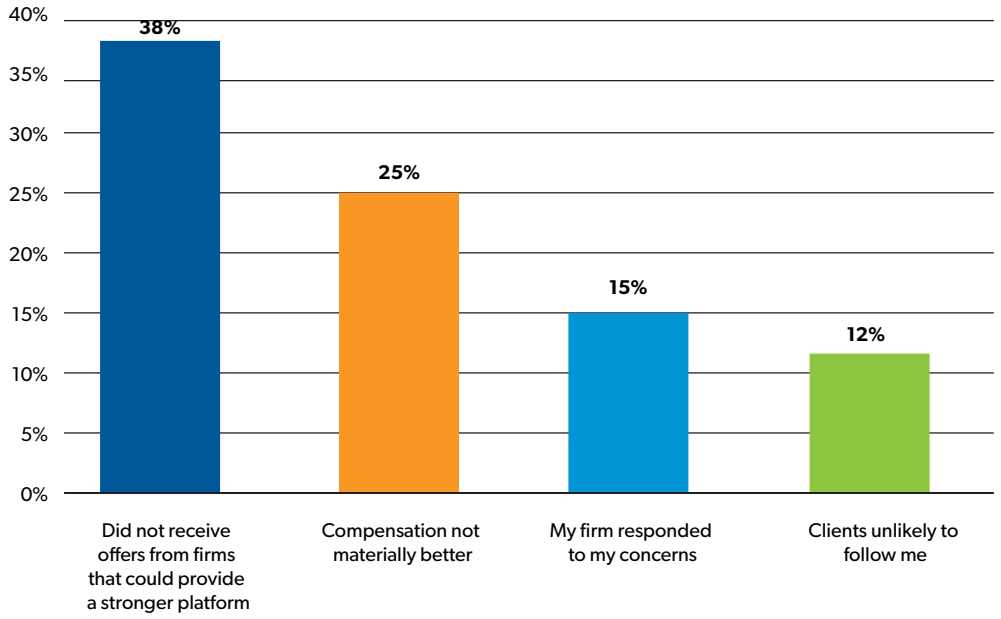
Be honest: *"Be honest about your book of business. If [not], you will not meet expectations, and your credibility will be irreparably damaged."*	**Create an integration plan:** *"Talk with other laterals at the firm you are considering to understand the integration process and expectations. It's better if [they're] in your practice group."*
Ask for cross sell opportunities: *"Focus on the firm's commitment to the practice you are joining, opportunities for leadership, leadership changes that may be on the horizon (and how that might impact culture) and the firm's demonstrated ability to successfully cross-sell lateral partners."*	**Understand how compensation works:** *"Understand what compensation other laterals [start at], the drivers of the compensation system, who will service your clients and what incentives service partners have to bill minimum hours,"*
Assess the cultural fit: *"Firm culture matters in your overall satisfaction with a new firm. While we all want to be well compensated (and probably all value our worth at the highest level) we need to be realistic about your worth and which clients will make the change."*	**Meet as many people as you can:** *"Meet with recent laterals to the firm; ask more about funding for retirement plans; learn about the management structure."*

V. REMAINERS (NON-LATERAL PARTNERS)

Six hundred thirty-eight respondents to this Survey were partners who had never made a lateral move to another law firm (aka the Remainers). Interestingly, a very high proportion (86%) of Remainers have been actively pursued or approached directly about a potential move. Question 1b sought to establish why the move did not go ahead, with the main factors shown in Figure 20. More than one third (38%) said they did not receive offers from other firms that could provide a stronger platform, one quarter (25%) did not go ahead with the move because the compensation was not materially better, and 15% because their current firm responded to their concerns.

Figure 20 >>>

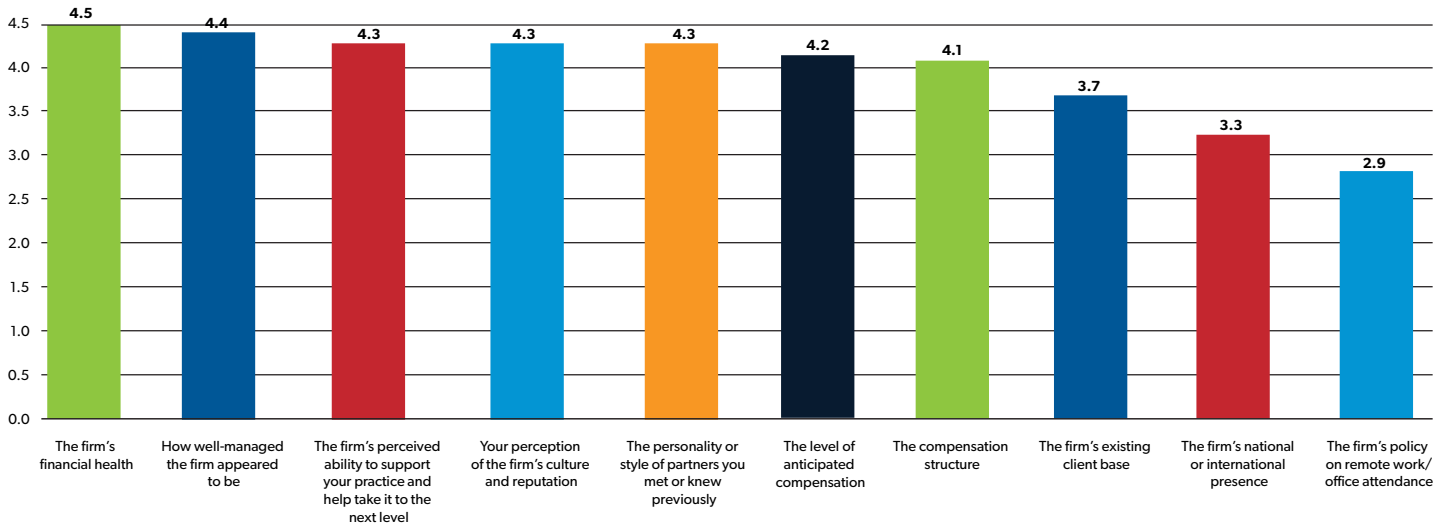
Figure 20 – Q1b. (Remainers) What Were the Main Reasons Why the Move Did Not Go Ahead?



Question 1c asked Remainers whether they felt that the growth in partner mobility is a positive or negative development for the legal profession. Responses split quite substantially here, with 41% viewing it as positive and 25% as a negative impact. **A vast majority of 85% felt that overall, their existing firm had benefited from partner mobility.**

Remainers were asked to comment on the importance various factors would have if they were to consider a move (the same question that was asked of lateral partners; see Table 4). 557 Remainers answered this question; the results are highlighted in Figure 21:

Figure 21 – Q1e. (Remainers) How Important Would the Following Factors Be If You Were to Consider a Lateral Move to Another Law Firm?



Foremost in the minds of Remainers, should they ever consider a move, is the new firm's financial health (4.5). This stands in sharp contrast with the priorities of laterals, who ranked it fourth (4.1).

How well managed the firm is and support for building one's practice were top three factors for both groups. At the bottom of the list for both groups are a firm's international or national presence and its policy on remote working, although Remainers did rate this one as more important (2.9) than Laterals did (1.8).

CONCLUSION

WHAT THESE FINDINGS MEAN FOR LATERAL PARTNERS AND THE FIRMS THAT HIRE THEM

The Survey reveals that the overwhelming majority of lateral partners (86%) are Satisfied with their moves. This satisfaction is closely tied to the effectiveness of the lateral integration process as well as (to a lesser extent) the level of candor experienced during the search process – where the reality meets or exceeds expectations, lateral partners are more content with their new home. As always, there are steps that candidates and law firms can take to increase the likelihood that the move will be a success for both parties.

KEY ACTIONS FOR PARTNERS HOPING TO MAKE A SUCCESSFUL MOVE:

1. **Determine whether your current firm's strategy and management are supportive of your practice.** If not, this is a key trigger to explore one's options.

2. **Take opportunities to speak to recent laterals, scrutinize the financial health of a new firm and fully understand compensation practices** – undertaking these actions strongly correlates with a successful lateral move.

3. **Seek open and honest conversations** about plans, compensation structures, strategy, and practice support. Candidates should be prepared to walk away if firms are not candid with them.

4. Use of a search firm as an intermediary, without more, does not automatically equate to a better outcome. Laterals should be more cautious with cold approaches and **choose a reputable search firm that will provide full support around due diligence, assistance in preparation of a business plan, and help analyzing the practice fit.** The data strongly suggests that this will result in a better outcome.

5. **Increased compensation should be expected by laterals in most cases, but the number on one's K-1 or W-2 should not be the sole driver of the decision.** Increased compensation is a by-product of better support for practice, more effective cross-selling, better firm management and financial stability, and a compensation structure that fits the strengths of the lateral and his or her practice.

6. Lateral partners should participate wholeheartedly in their new firm's integration programs, particularly as cross-selling opportunities arise.

KEY ACTIONS FOR LAW FIRMS SEEKING LATERAL PARTNERS

1. **Don't over-promise.** Sooner or later – usually sooner – the lateral will discern that the firm does not in fact have a cracker-jack tax partner with expertise in the area the lateral needs for her deals. Apart from feeling misled, the lateral partner will now have a very specific reason to consider leaving. By contrast, if the firm had said "we don't have that expertise yet but if you join, we will find the right person and you will be part of that process", they might be more understanding. Again, **Satisfaction = Reality/Expectation**.

2. The firm's **lateral partner integration process must be robust, with real follow-through,** and not just a checklist of tasks. It should be overseen by someone with authority, who knows the firm well enough to be able to identify cross-selling opportunities. That begins throughout the interview process (where possible synergies are discussed and recorded so they are not lost in the hubbub of a new arrival) and continues well after the lateral joins the firm.

3. **Firms must act decisively.** As law firms identify talented lawyers they wish to pursue, it is critical to be thoughtful and deliberate while also moving decisively. Keep forward momentum going in the wooing process and minimize process delays. Competition is fierce for high-end talent, particularly strong teams and groups, and firms that have never in the past considered lateral partners are now full-fledged combatants in the war for talent. In this year's survey, 58% of respondents joined their current firm within 90 days of first contact. The adages "he who hesitates is lost" and "time kills all deals" have particular resonance in the current era of Big Law talent acquisitions, where more than 3,700 partners changed firms in 2022.

4. **Retaining top talent.** To hold onto top recruited talent, firms must follow through on all statements of support made during the interview process. Lateral partners' satisfaction with their move is strongly influenced by whether their feeling of having been supported and integrated into the firm matches or exceeds their expectations when they joined.

By addressing these key factors, both law firms and lateral partners can increase the likelihood of a successful and satisfying "marriage."

Survey respondents, managing partners and other members of firm management who desire a more detailed briefing on the results of the Survey may contact:

- Jon Lindsey, Founding Partner (NY): jlindsey@MLAglobal.com; 212-421-1029
- Ron Wood, Managing Director: rowood@MLAglobal.com; 213-689-0714 | 213-689-0700 | 310-651-0915

To learn more about our firm please visit our website at www.MLAglobal.com

APPENDIX I

METHODOLOGY

Data for the Survey was collected using an online questionnaire hosted by Thomson Reuters Institute. Invitations were emailed to law firm partners across the United States, including those at firms listed in The American Lawyer's AmLaw 200 listing of the largest firms by revenue. The emailed invitation contained a link which partners could use to access the online survey. To maximize the response rate, three email reminders, spaced about two weeks apart, were also sent.

The questionnaire was developed by Major, Lindsey & Africa. As an incentive to complete the Survey, respondents were entered into a drawing to win an American Express gift certificate valued at $1,000 (or, at the winner's option, a donation of that sum to the charity of his or her choosing). Respondents who also answered Questions 37 and 38 of the Survey were entered into a separate drawing for an additional $500 American Express gift certificate (or similar donation).

Responses were received from 1,953 partners. 1,315 responses came from lateral partners practicing across the United States. A small percentage (0.3%) was located outside of the U.S. In addition, responses were received from 638 partners who had never made a lateral move; they were asked their views on partner mobility and factors to be weighed when considering a move to another law firm. With more than 74,000 lateral partners being invited to participate in the survey, the overall response rate was approximately 2.6%. As is customary with surveys of this nature, not every respondent answered every question, although the vast majority answered all relevant questions. Each data table notes the actual number of respondents for each category. In order to present the data meaningfully, in certain cases, individual respondents were grouped into larger categories.

APPENDIX II

ABOUT THE SURVEY

The Survey posed a total of 38 questions to lateral partners, broken down into five major categories:

Demographic information about each respondent and the respondent's current law firm, including: (i) years as a partner; (ii) partnership status; (iii) number of lateral moves as a partner; (iv) primary practice area; (v) city; (vi) whether respondent joined his or her current firm from a firm with a lower, higher, or similar PPP (profits per equity partner); (vii) whether respondent joined his or her current firm as part of a group or merger; (viii) compensation transparency of current firm; (ix) lockstep or other nature of current firm's compensation system; (x) whether current firm is a single tier or multi-tier partnership; (xi) gender; (xii) age; and (xiii) ethnicity. For gender, an option for non-binary/third gender was provided, but no respondents selected this option. 25 individuals preferred not to share their gender. For ethnicity, the options were those used by the American Bar Association: White not Hispanic; Black not Hispanic; Hispanic; Asian Pacific not Hispanic; Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander not Hispanic; Native American not Hispanic; or Prefer not to answer. Due to the small numbers of individuals identifying as Native Hawaiian Pacific Islander (2) and Native American (1), these ethnicities were excluded from the tables. 70 preferred not to provide their ethnicity.

Information about the respondent's search process, including: (i) number of firms considered; (ii) length of search; (iii) reasons for leaving former firm; (iv) factors important in choosing current firm; (v) the extent to which those factors coincided with expectations; (vi) information obtained about the current firm before joining; (vii) other due diligence inquiries undertaken before joining the current firm; (viii) whether various factors about the current firm and its platform were considered; and (ix) the extent to which compensation was guaranteed.

Information regarding integration process and satisfaction with the lateral move, including: (i) the effectiveness of the firm's integration process; (ii) the extent to which the respondent's originations have increased or decreased since joining the firm; (iii) respondent's overall satisfaction with the lateral move; (iv) respondent's satisfaction with current compensation and how it has changed since the move; (v) whether respondents would make the same decision if given another opportunity; and (vi) whether respondents thought the current firm was candid about the opportunity presented by the firm.

Questions about improving the search process, which allowed respondents to submit personal responses, including: (i) whether respondents would have done anything differently as part of the search; (ii) what advice they would give to another partner who is either considering or going through a lateral move; and (iii) what part of the process, if anything, they believe could be improved.

The role played by search firms, including: (i) whether respondents used a search firm; (ii) the manner in which the search firm was used; (iii) whether a search firm was involved in the submission to the current firm; (iv) whether respondents or the search firm initiated contact with the other; (v) the type of assistance provided by the search firm; and (vi) whether respondent was satisfied with the assistance of the search firm.

The Survey also contained a short section of questions posed to the 638 respondents who had not made a lateral move, including: (i) whether respondent has ever been approached about a move; (ii) the reasons why the move did not go ahead; (iii) whether they feel the growth in partner mobility is a positive or negative development for the legal profession; (iv) whether their firm has benefited from partner mobility; and (v) how important various key factors would be if they did decide to make a lateral move.

APPENDIX III

THE RESPONDENTS

A total of 1,953 responses were received from law firm partners practicing across the United States and abroad, of whom 1,315 identified as lateral partners. Respondents included partners from more than 30 practice areas and more than 60 cities.

- Reflecting the population of lateral partners generally, 80% of the respondents overall identified themselves as White not Hispanic, 3% as Black not Hispanic, 4% as Hispanic, 2% as mixed races and 6% as Asian Pacific, not Hispanic. As a total of those who disclosed their ethnicity, ethnically diverse lateral respondents amounted to 238. 1,337 lateral partners identified as White. [1]
- Thirty percent of the lateral respondents who specified their gender were female – a 10% increase since 2014.
- Contrary to the popular perception of fast-spinning revolving doors and constant "churn", **only 6% of the respondents had moved laterally as a partner more than three times in their careers, and only 10% as many as three times.** Fully 63% of the respondents had moved only once as lateral partners in their careers; another 21% had moved only twice. Each of these data points closely tracked the figures in the 2020 Survey.
- Practice areas for survey respondents also tracked general distribution for larger law firms and were remarkably similar to the practice breakdown in 2020: 22% litigation, 19% corporate, 10% tax/ERISA; 6% intellectual property, 2% labor & employment, and 1% real estate.
- 1,248 lateral respondents provided the city in which they primarily practice. Of these, 213 of (17%) were from New York City/Northern New Jersey, 175 from Washington DC/Northern Virginia (14%), 129 from Chicago (10%), and 84 from San Francisco/Oakland/Silicon Valley (7%). The remaining 52% of respondents were based in other metro areas in the U.S. 0.3% of respondents were from firms outside of the U.S.
- Sixty-eight percent of the respondents came to their current firm as an individual rather than as part of a group (28%) or merger (4%).
- Fifty-one percent joined their current firm as equity partners, 49% as non-equity partners. (These statistics in part may reflect the fact that partners joining a firm with even a brief guarantee period are often designated as non-equity until they can be properly slotted into the firm's compensation system to rise and fall with the rest of the partnership.)
- Twenty-four percent of lateral partners joined firms that are single-tier partnerships and 76% joined multi-tier partnerships — again, results quite similar to the figures in 2020.

1. The ethnic categories used in the Survey tracked those previously used by the American Bar Association. Throughout the balance of this Report, they will be listed as listed as White, Black, Hispanic, and Asian Pacific. Because of the small number of respondents from the non-White categories, it is difficult to draw any statistically meaningful conclusions from those responses.

APPENDIX IV

SURVEY QUESTIONS

Major, Lindsey & Africa Lateral Partner Satisfaction Survey

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this survey. Your responses will be kept **strictly confidential** by Thomson Reuters and no identifying information will be associated with your answers or forwarded to Major, Lindsey & Africa or any other party.

As a thank you for your time, all survey participants will be entered in a random drawing. The winner can choose either to receive a **$1,000 American Express gift card** or to donate that sum to the charity of their choice. In addition, Major, Lindsey & Africa will make a **$1 donation to The Legal Aid Society** for every completed survey. Each participant will receive an electronic copy of the Survey Report.

1. Did you join your current law firm laterally as a partner?

- O Yes
- O No — *go to 1a*.

[non-lateral section if 'no' above]

1a. Have you ever actively pursued, or been approached directly about, a potential lateral move?

- O Yes
- O No

1b. [If yes] What were the main reasons why the move did not go ahead?

- O My firm responded to my concerns
- O Clients unlikely to follow me
- O Compensation not materially better
- O Did not receive offers from firms that could provide a stronger platform

1c. Do you feel that the growth in partner mobility is a positive or negative development for the legal profession?

- O Positive
- O Negative
- O Neutral

1d. Overall, do you think your firm has benefited from partner mobility

- O Benefited by the addition of new partners
- O Benefitted by the departure of partners
- O Both of the above
- O Neither

1e. How important would the following factors be if you were ever to consider a lateral move to another law firm:

	5 – Most important	4	3 – Somewhat important	2	1 – Least important
Your perception of the firm's culture and reputation	O	O	O	O	O
The personality or style of partners you met or knew previously	O	O	O	O	O
How well-managed the firm appeared to be	O	O	O	O	O
The level of anticipat-ed compensation	O	O	O	O	O
The compensation structure	O	O	O	O	O
The firm's financial health	O	O	O	O	O
The firm's existing client base	O	O	O	O	O
The firm's perceived ability to support your practice and help take it to the next level	O	O	O	O	O
The firm's national or international presence	O	O	O	O	O
The firm's policy on remote work/office attendance	O	O	O	O	O

We appreciate the time you took to participate and hope that you will continue to do so in the future.

[End section]
[go to end of survey]

2. Did you join your new firm as:

- O An individual partner
- O Leader of a lateral group
- O Member of a lateral group
- O Part of a merger

3. Did you join your firm from

- O A less profitable firm – i.e., with lower PPP (profits per equity partner)
- O A more profitable firm – i.e. with higher PPP
- O A firm with similar profitability/PPP
- O Government or judicial position
- O In-house legal department
- O None of the above

4. How many years have you been a partner at your current law firm?

- O 0 to 5 years
- O 6 to 10 years
- O 11 to 20 years
- O More than 20 years

4a. How many years have you been a partner in total at any law firm, including your current firm?

- O 0 to 5 years
- O 6 to 10 years
- O 11 to 20 years
- O More than 20 years

5. Did you join your current firm as an Equity Partner or Non-Equity Partner?

- O Equity Partner
- O Non-Equity Partner

6. How many times have you moved laterally as a partner, including your most recent move?

- O 1
- O 2
- O 3
- O 4
- O 5
- O 6
- O 7
- O 8
- O 9
- O 10+

7. What is your primary practice area?

- O Administrative/Regulatory
- O Antitrust

- O Banking
- O Bankruptcy
- O Corporate – General
- O Corporate – Finance/Securities
- O Corporate – M&A
- O Cybersecurity
- O Employment/Labor
- O Energy/Renewables
- O Entertainment
- O Environmental
- O ERISA/Benefits
- O Government Contracts
- O Healthcare
- O Immigration
- O Insurance
- O International
- O IP – Litigation
- O IP – Transactional
- O Litigation – General
- O Litigation – Appellate
- O Litigation – White Collar/Securities Enforcement/ Investigations
- O Project Finance/Infrastructure
- O Real Estate
- O Tax
- O Trade/Sanctions
- O Trusts & Estates
- O Other (please specify) _____

8. In what city do you primarily practice?

- O Akron, OH
- O Albuquerque, NM
- O Arlington, TX
- O Atlanta, GA
- O Austin, TX
- O Baltimore, MD
- O Birmingham, AL
- O Boston, MA
- O Buffalo, NY
- O Charlotte, NC
- O Chicago, IL
- O Cincinnati, OH
- O Cleveland, OH
- O Colorado Springs, CO
- O Columbia, SC
- O Columbus, OH
- O Dallas, TX
- O Denver, CO
- O Detroit, MI
- O El Paso, TX
- O Fort Worth, TX
- O Fresno, CA
- O Greenville, SC
- O Hartford, CT
- O Honolulu, HI
- O Houston, TX
- O Indianapolis, IN
- O Irvine, CA
- O Jacksonville, FL
- O Kansas City, MO
- O Las Vegas, NV
- O Long Beach, CA
- O Los Angeles, CA
- O Louisville, KY

- O Memphis, TN
- O Mesa, AZ
- O Miami, FL
- O Milwaukee, WI
- O Minneapolis, MN
- O Nashville, TN
- O New Orleans, LA
- O New York, NY
- O Newark, NJ/Northern NJ
- O Oakland, CA
- O Oklahoma City, OK
- O Omaha, NE
- O Orange County, CA
- O Orlando, FL
- O Palo Alto/Silicon Valley, CA
- O Philadelphia, PA
- O Phoenix, AZ
- O Pittsburgh, PA
- O Portland, OR
- O Providence, RI
- O Raleigh, NC
- O Richmond, VA
- O Sacramento, CA
- O San Antonio, TX
- O San Diego, CA
- O San Francisco, CA
- O San Jose, CA
- O Seattle, WA
- O St. Louis, MO
- O Tallahassee, FL
- O Tampa, FL
- O Tucson, AZ
- O Tulsa, OK
- O Virginia Beach/Tidewater, VA
- O Washington, D.C./NoVA
- O Westchester, NY
- O Winston-Salem, NC
- O Outside of the United States
- O Other (please specify) _____

9. How many firms were you presented to and/or interview with as part of your search process in selecting your current firm?

- O 1
- O 2
- O 3
- O 4
- O 5
- O 6
- O 7
- O 8
- O 9
- O 10+

10. How long did your search take (estimated time from your decision to explore the market to accepted offer)?

- O 0 to 3 months
- O 4 to 6 months
- O 6 months to 1 year
- O More than 1 year

11. How long did the process take with the firm you joined (estimated time from first contact with your current firm to accepted offer)?

- O 0 to 3 months
- O 4 to 6 months
- O 6 months to 1 year
- O More than 1 year

12. Why did you leave your former firm? Please select all that apply.

- O Compensation
- O Client conflicts
- O Firm's financial health
- O Did not like the firm's culture
- O Needed more/different offices
- O Disparate treatment due to gender
- O Disparate treatment due to race
- O Disparate treatment due to sexual orientation
- O Lack of support to build practice
- O Lack of confidence in firm management/strategy
- O Retirement policy / age-related concerns
- O Lack of leadership opportunities
- O Asked to leave
- O Other (please specify) _____

13. What factors were most important to you in choosing your current firm?

	5 – Most important	4	3 – Somewhat important	2	1 – Least important
Your perception of the firm's culture and reputation	O	O	O	O	O
The personality or style of partners you met or knew previously	O	O	O	O	O
How well-managed the firm appeared to be	O	O	O	O	O
The level of anticipat-ed compensation	O	O	O	O	O
The compensation structure	O	O	O	O	O
The firm's financial health	O	O	O	O	O
The firm's existing client base	O	O	O	O	O
The firm's perceived ability to support your practice and help take it to the next level	O	O	O	O	O
The firm's national or international presence	O	O	O	O	O
The firm's policy on remote work/office attendance	O	O	O	O	O

14. To what extent have each of the factors listed in fact coincided with your expectations?

	5 – Exceeded expectations	4	3 – Met expectations	2	1 – Did not meet expectations
Your perception of the firm's culture and reputation	O	O	O	O	O
The personality or style of partners you met or knew previously	O	O	O	O	O
How well-managed the firm appeared to be	O	O	O	O	O
The level of anticipat-ed compensation	O	O	O	O	O
The compensation structure	O	O	O	O	O
The firm's financial health	O	O	O	O	O
The firm's existing client base	O	O	O	O	O
The firm's perceived ability to support your practice and help take it to the next level	O	O	O	O	O
The firm's national or international presence	O	O	O	O	O
The firm's policy on remote work/office attendance	O	O	O	O	O

15. Before joining your new firm, did you obtain adequate and accurate information about:

	Yes	No
The financial health of the new firm	O	O
Compensation practices and procedures	O	O
Governance mechanisms and procedures	O	O
Practice support (complementary practitioners, associates, tax, marketing, etc.)	O	O
Lateral integration process	O	O

16. Which of the following due diligence inquiries did you undertake? (Please check all that apply)

- O Met/spoke with the firm's Chair/Managing Partner
- O Met/spoke with the firm's CFO
- O Met/spoke with the firm's benefits manager
- O Met/spoke with the firm's liability carrier and/or requested information concerning outstanding claims against the firm
- O Requested meeting/call with the firm's existing clients
- O Requested meeting/call with recent laterals to the firm
- O Reviewed the firm's financial statements/lease/loan documents
- O Reviewed the firm's partnership agreement
- O Reviewed the firm's Peer Report or similar report

17. **How effective was your firm in engaging in in the following integration efforts with you when you joined?**

	5 – Very Effective	4	3 – Somewhat effective	2	1 – Very ineffective
Firm's efforts to integrate you into the partnership	O	O	O	O	O
Cross-selling you to firm clients	O	O	O	O	O
Cross-selling firm's other services to your clients	O	O	O	O	O
Communicating the firm's expectations to you	O	O	O	O	O
Eliciting your expectations about the firm	O	O	O	O	O

18. **How much of a consideration were the following issues in your decision to join your new firm rather than another firm, or remaining at your old firm?**

	5 – Very much	4	3 – Somewhat	2	1 – Very little
Planned expansion/growth into new geographic area(s)	O	O	O	O	O
Planned expansion/growth into new practice area(s)	O	O	O	O	O
Ability to practice internationally/cross-borders	O	O	O	O	O
Diversity of the new firm's people	O	O	O	O	O
Anticipated compensation	O	O	O	O	O

19. **Was your compensation guaranteed for a minimum period of time when you joined your new firm and, if so, for how long?**

- O My compensation was not guaranteed
- O My compensation was guaranteed for the remainder of the year
- O My compensation was guaranteed for the remainder of the year and the following year
- O My compensation was guaranteed for the remainder of the year and the next two years
- O My compensation was guaranteed for more than the next two years plus the rest of the year

20. **In joining your current firm what was the projected level of originations you expected to generate in the first full year:**

- O <1M
- O 1-2
- O 2+-3
- O 3+-5
- O 5+-8
- O 8-10
- O >10M

21. In your first full year with your firm what were your originations?

- O <1M
- O 1-2
- O 2+-3
- O 3+-5
- O 5+-8
- O 8-10
- O >10M

22. In the three years after you joined your current firm did your originations:

- O Increase 1-10%
- O Increase 11-20%
- O Increase 21-30%
- O Increase more than 30%
- O Remain roughly the same
- O Decrease

23. Overall, how satisfied are you with your current firm?

- O I am very satisfied
- O I am somewhat satisfied
- O I am not very satisfied
- O I am not at all satisfied

24. Generally, how satisfied are you with your current compensation?

- O I am very satisfied
- O I am somewhat satisfied
- O I am not very satisfied
- O I am not at all satisfied

25. In the three years after you joined your current firm did your compensation:

- O Increase 1-10%

- O Increase 11-20%
- O Increase 21-30%
- O Increase more than 30%
- O Remain roughly the same
- O Decrease

26. If you had it to do all over again, would you have:

- O Stayed at your former firm
- O Moved, but to a different firm or company
- O Moved to your current firm

27. In retrospect, how candid was your firm with you about the opportunity to join the firm (cross-selling or leadership opportunities, culture, finances, integration plan, billing expectations or otherwise)?

- O Very candid
- O Somewhat candid
- O Not very candid
- O Not at all candid
- O Can't say

28. What, if anything, do you wish you had done differently as part of your search? (check all that apply):

- O Nothing
- O Started the process earlier in the year
- O Spoken to more firms
- O Used a recruiter as an intermediary/resource
- O Reviewed the firm's financials in greater depth
- O Done more thorough due diligence
- O Negotiated a better compensation package
- O Had a better understanding of firm's capital structure/retirement policy
- O Other… _____

29. Was a legal search firm involved when you moved to your current firm?

O Yes O No

If "No" Is Selected, Then Skip To "Finally, just a few baground questions…"

Answer If 29. Was a legal search firm involved when you … Yes Is Selected

29a In which way did you use a legal search firm?

- O Used one search firm only
- O Used multiple search firms
- O Used one or more search firms and also self-submitted

Answer If 29. Was a legal search firm involved when you … Yes Is Selected

29b. Did you reach out to the search firm or did the search firm reach out to you?

- O Search firm approached me
- O I sought out the search firm

Answer If 29.Was a legal search firm involved when you … Yes Is Selected

29c. When you moved to your current firm, did the search firm:

	Yes	No
Prepare or assist in developing a practice profile and/or business plan	O	O
Analyze the fit between your client base/practice area and the firm's	O	O
Act as intermediary or otherwise assist in negotiations	O	O
Provide detailed information about potential firms	O	O

Answer If 29.Was a legal search firm involved when you … Yes Is Selected

29d. How satisfied were you with the assistance of the search firm?

- O I was very satisfied
- O I was somewhat satisfied
- O I was not very satisfied
- O I was not at all satisfied
- O Can't say

Finally, just a few background questions.

30. Is your firm's compensation system an open or closed one, i.e., do you know what other partners make?

- O Open: I know what everyone makes, or can easily find out

- O Partially Open: I know ranges of compensation, but do not know exactly who makes what
- O Closed: I don't know what anyone else makes

31. Is your firm's compensation system pure lockstep, generally lockstep but it allows for some variance based on certain factors, or not lockstep at all? (As you may know, lockstep means that compensation is based on seniority and not on ability, contribution, experience or work product.)

- O My firm is pure lockstep
- O My firm is generally lockstep, but allows for some variance
- O My firm is not lockstep at all

32. Is your firm a single tier partnership or a multi-tier partnership?

- O My firm is a single tier partnership
- O My firm is a multi-tier partnership

33. What is your gender?

- O Male
- O Female
- O Non-binary/third gender/prefer to self-describe
- O Prefer not to answer

34. What is your age?

- O 30-39
- O 40-49
- O 50-59
- O 60-69
- O 70-99

35. Which of these categories, used by the American Bar Association, best describes your ethnicity?

- O White, not Hispanic
- O Black, not Hispanic
- O Hispanic
- O Asian Pacific, not Hispanic
- O American Indian, not Hispanic
- O Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, not Hispanic

- O Mixed races
- O Prefer not to answer

36. **Would you be willing to answer just two more questions about your experience?** We will ask you to comment in an open-ended format and thank you in advance for taking just a few minutes more to share your thoughts with us. Survey participants who answer those two questions will be entered in an additional random drawing; the winner can choose either to receive a $500 American Express gift card or to donate that sum to the charity of their choice.

- O Yes
- O No

37. **What advice would you give to another partner who is either considering or going through a lateral move?**

38. **What part or parts of the lateral process, if anything, do you think can be improved?**

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