

Survey: One-Third Of Lawyers Would Make Lateral Career Move For Promise Of Greater Pay Down The Road

MENLO PARK, Calif., Oct. 10, 2018 /CNW/ -- Sometimes it is about the money. More than one-third (36 percent) of lawyers surveyed recently by Robert Half Legal said they would be most enticed to make a lateral job change to another law firm if it came with higher earnings potential. Work-life balance ranked second as a top incentive to leave their current employer, receiving 29 percent of the survey response.

Money is a top consideration, as well, for law firms looking to bring in experienced associates to help broaden their service offerings, and many have portable business requirements when recruiting outside lawyers. One-third (33 percent) of those who were surveyed said their firm's minimum book of business requirement is \$250,000 to \$500,000.

"Midsize and boutique law firms, in particular, have a critical need for experienced associates to help them expand high-demand practice groups," said Jamy Sullivan, executive director of Robert Half Legal. "Lawyers with extensive practice area expertise who can meet or exceed a firm's portable business requirements often command above-market salaries."

Sullivan added that while making a sideways move may slow a traditional path to law firm partnership, lawyers often see an upside to changing jobs. "Taking a lateral position at a new firm can offer legal practitioners a unique opportunity to redefine their careers, boost compensation and enhance overall job satisfaction."

Research conducted by Robert Half Legal for its 2019 Salary Guide revealed average annual starting salaries for senior-level lawyers to have a midpoint of \$130,000 in the United States. Download a complimentary copy of the guide and access a salary calculator at the [Robert Half Legal Salary Center](#).

Lawyers were asked, "**Which one of the following incentives would most entice you to make a lateral career move in your field?**" Their responses:*

Earnings potential	36%
Work-life balance	29%
Professional autonomy	13%
Career advancement opportunities in the new role	8%
Job security	4%
Other	1%
Don't know	2%
Not applicable	8%
	101%

**Responses do not total 100 percent due to rounding.*

Lawyers were also asked, "**What is your law firm's minimum portable business requirement when recruiting senior-level lawyers?**" Their responses:**

Less than \$50,000	1%
\$50,000 - \$100,000	10%
\$100,000 - \$250,000	12%

\$250,000 - \$500,000	33%
\$500,000 - \$750,000	3%
\$750,000 - \$1,000,000	1%
More than \$1,000,000	0%
Not applicable/firm does not have a minimum portable business requirement	29%
Don't know	<u>12%</u>
	101%

*** Responses do not total 100 percent due to rounding.*

On average, the minimum book of business required by law firms is \$297,000.

Survey Methodology

The online survey was developed by Robert Half Legal and conducted by a leading independent research firm. It is based on responses from 200 lawyers in the United States and Canada who work full time at law firms with 20 or more employees. Respondents possess five-plus years' experience in the legal profession and are involved in managing the hiring of legal personnel.

About Robert Half Legal

Robert Half Legal is the premier provider of legal staffing and consulting solutions for law firms and corporate legal departments. With North American and global locations, Robert Half Legal provides a customized approach, including managed review, legal project management and eDiscovery services, to help organizations handle constantly changing workloads. The company offers in-demand expertise across practice areas, as well as highly skilled legal professionals on a temporary, project and full-time basis. More information about our full suite of legal staffing and consulting solutions can be found at roberthalf.com/legal.

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