Survey: Two in Five Law Firms, Companies in Canada Plan to Expand Legal Teams in Next Six Months

- Legal assistants, lawyers and law clerks among top full-time positions being added
- Shortage of qualified candidates is greatest hiring challenge
- Privacy/data security, general business/corporate law expected to produce largest number of legal jobs

TORONTO, Dec. 11, 2018 /CNW/ - Data privacy and business concerns are accelerating demand for legal professionals in these and other specialty areas. According to Robert Half Legal's State of Legal Hiring research, two in five lawyers in Canada (40 per cent) said their law firm or company plans to expand their legal teams in the first half of 2019. More than one-third of lawyers (36 per cent) anticipate staffing only vacated positions. Sixteen per cent said they would neither fill vacated positions nor create new ones, while 8 per cent foresee reductions.

Nearly three in 10 lawyers (28 per cent) predict privacy, data security and information law will be the top driver of job growth in the legal field during the first half of 2019, followed by general business/corporate law, which garnered 23 per cent of the survey response. Litigation ranked third, with 17 per cent of the response.

Other Research Findings

- Ninety-seven per cent of lawyers said finding skilled legal professionals is somewhat or very challenging.
- Thirty-eight per cent of respondents said that a shortage of qualified candidates is the greatest challenge their law firm/company faces when hiring.
- The top full-time positions being added by law firms/companies in the first half of 2019 are legal assistants (74 per cent), lawyers (73 per cent) and law clerks (51 per cent).
- When hiring lawyers, technology skills/digital expertise is the most important factor to employers, aside from legal knowledge.
- On average, 21 per cent of open positions at law firms/companies will be filled on a temporary, project or consulting basis.
- Ninety-four per cent of lawyers are concerned with losing top performers to other opportunities.
- Flexible work arrangements, professional development opportunities and company perks were cited as the best incentives for retaining employees, aside from compensation or bonus.

"An increase in privacy, corporate and regulatory matters is spurring demand for lawyers and legal support staff with relevant expertise," said Jamy Sullivan, executive director of Robert Half Legal. "Many employers are seeking legal professionals with compliance, data privacy and corporate law experience, which is intensifying competition for specialized talent in these areas."

Sullivan added that hiring managers should act quickly when they find ideal applicants or risk losing them to another offer. "In today's environment, job seekers with superior legal skills, business acumen and advanced technical knowledge are receiving multiple offers. Employers that offer competitive pay and perks will be better positioned to attract top candidates."

Lawyers were asked, "**Which one of the following practice areas will offer the greatest number of job opportunities at your law firm or company in the first half of 2019?**" Their responses:*

Privacy, data security and information law	**28%**
General business or corporate law	23%
Litigation	17%
Regulatory or compliance	11%
Intellectual property	10%
Ethics and corporate governance	9%
Real estate	2%
Other	1%

	101%

**Responses do not total 100 per cent due to rounding.*

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 more than 150 lawyers in Canada who work full time at law firms with 20 or more employees and corporate legal departments with 1,000 or more employees, or as solo practitioners. 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.ca/legal.

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