

Survey: Six in 10 Law Firms, Companies in Canada Plan to Add New Legal Jobs in Next Six Months

- Corporate law, litigation expected to drive legal job growth
- Shortage of qualified candidates the greatest hiring challenge
- Practice area expertise, technology skills top criteria for hiring lawyers

Toronto, ON — The legal field is expected to see an increase in hiring in the months ahead, with corporate law driving the greatest job growth. According to Robert Half Legal's State of Legal Hiring research, more than six in 10 lawyers in Canada (63 per cent) said their law firm or company plans to expand their legal teams in the second half of 2019, up 23 percentage points from [the last time the survey was conducted](#). More than one-third of lawyers (34 per cent) anticipate staffing only vacated positions, while one per cent said they would neither staff vacated positions nor create new ones. Just one per cent expect staffing reductions.

Nearly one-third of lawyers (32 per cent) predict general business/corporate law will generate the most employment opportunities during the next six months, followed by litigation, which received 20 per cent of the response, and privacy, data security and information law (10 per cent).

View an [infographic](#) of the legal employment market for the second half of 2019.

Other research findings

- More than 9 in 10 lawyers (93 per cent) said finding skilled legal professionals is somewhat or very challenging.
- More than four in 10 respondents (41 per cent) said that a shortage of qualified candidates is the greatest challenge their law firm/company faces when hiring, up three percentage points from the last time the survey was conducted.
- The top full-time positions being added by law firms/companies in the second half of 2019 are lawyers (64 per cent), legal assistants (44 per cent) and law clerks (39 per cent).
- Aside from legal knowledge, practice area expertise and technology skills are the two most important criteria to employers when hiring lawyers.
- Among those planning to expand their legal teams, 27 per cent of lawyers said that 11 per cent to 20 per cent of the open positions at their law firm/company will be staffed on a temporary, project or consulting basis, while 23 per cent plan to staff 21 per cent to 30 per cent of vacant roles on an interim basis.
- More than 8 in 10 lawyers (84 per cent) are concerned about losing top performers to other opportunities.
- Other than compensation or bonuses, lawyers cited flexible work arrangements (31 per cent), professional development opportunities (26 per cent) and challenging work or variety of assignments (24 per cent) as the top incentives for retaining employees.

"Class action filings, regulatory requirements and cybersecurity challenges continue to grow and are intensifying competition for specialized legal professionals with litigation, compliance and data privacy backgrounds," said Jamy Sullivan, executive director of Robert Half Legal. "Many law firms and companies are reassessing compensation packages to offer competitive pay and bonuses that in-demand candidates seek from prospective employers."

Law firms and companies also recognize the importance of improving internal retention strategies, Sullivan added. "By expanding professional development programs and offering perks to enhance work-life balance, employers are better able to stem attrition and boost employee engagement."

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 second half of 2019?" Their responses:

General business or corporate law	32%
Litigation	20%
Privacy, data security and information law	18%
Intellectual property	10%
Ethics and corporate governance	9%
Real estate	5%
Regulatory or compliance	3%
Other	0%
Don't know	<u>3%</u>
	100%

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 or in corporate legal departments at companies with 1,000 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.ca/legal.

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