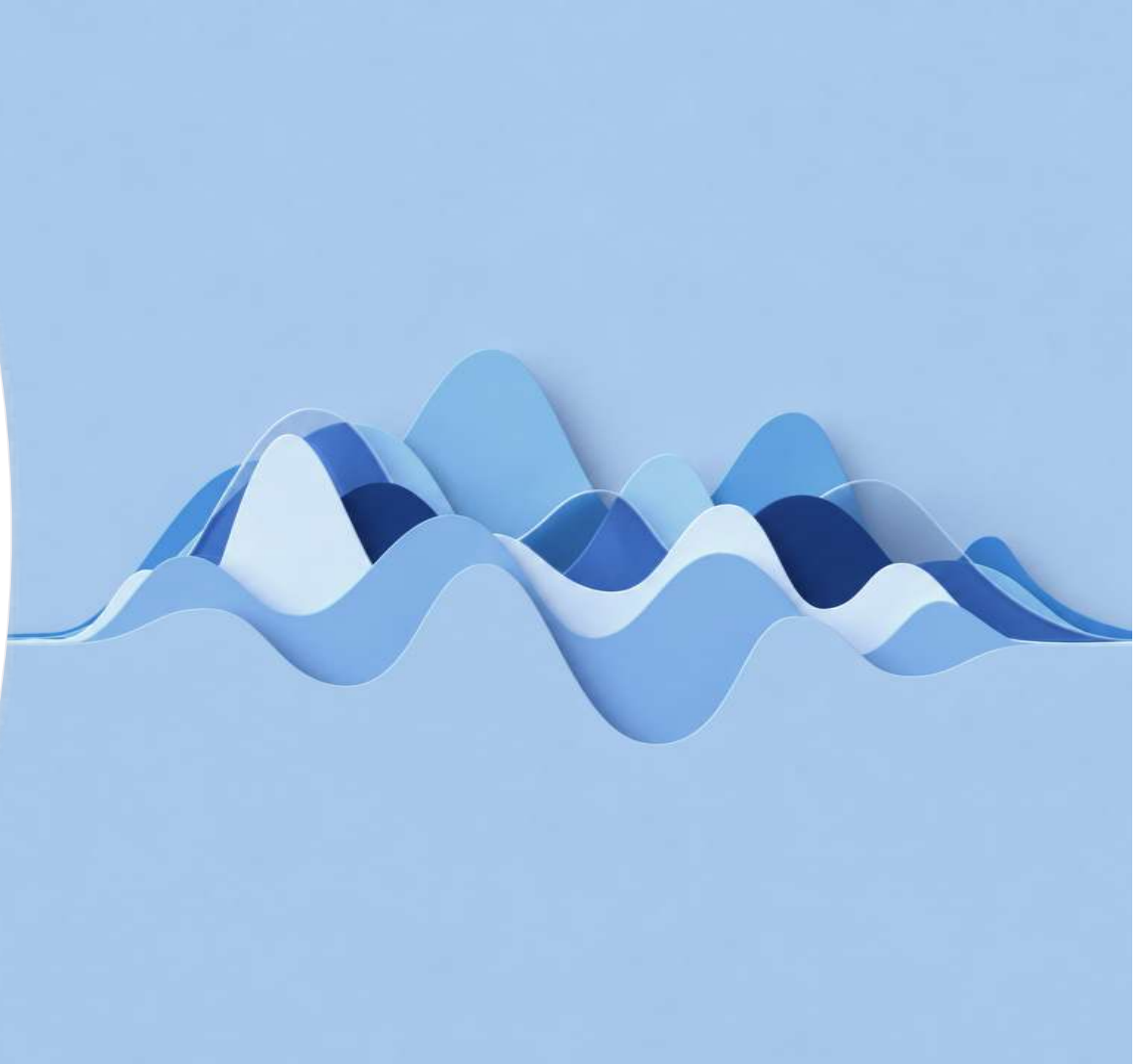
Law Firm Marketing & Business Development Salary Survey

Fall 2026



Wisnik Career Enterprises
110 E 40th St, New York NY 212-370-1010
ewisnik@wisnik.com - www.Wisnik.com

Eva’s Bio

Eva is one of the most trusted voices in legal talent, a career strategist and executive recruiter who has spent over three decades shaping how America’s most prestigious law firms hire, train, and retain their people.

She founded Wisnik Career Enterprises in 1996 after running recruitment and training at Schulte Roth & Zabel and Cadwalader, Wickersham & Taft. Over the years, she has worked with more than 120 law firms, including much of the Am Law 100, placed over 1,000 recruitment and marketing professionals, and delivered more than 800 training programs nationwide.

She earned a degree in psychology from Barnard College, Columbia University, and an MBA in marketing from Fordham University. Her insights have been featured in The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, and Bloomberg.





Jake's Bio

Jake Wisnik is a Recruiting Specialist at Wisnik Career Enterprises, where he supports law firm placement, training programs and salary survey operations. He earned his BA in International Relations with a concentration in Global Business from the University of Southern California, graduating Summa Cum Laude in May of 2023.

Before joining Wisnik, Jake served as a JDC Entwine Global Jewish Service Corps Fellow at the Jewish Community Center in Krakow, Poland. He also worked as a strategic communications analyst at C Street Advisory Group in New York City.

Shannan's Bio

Shannan Buckley is the Director of Recruiting & Training Operations at Wisnik Career Enterprises, Inc., where she has managed training programs and placed business services talent into top law firms for the past 8 years. She has conducted 30 salary surveys for recruiting, marketing and business development professionals nationwide.

Before joining Wisnik, Shannan worked in education both in the U.S. and abroad. She holds a BA in French & Francophone Studies from Carleton College and an MA in International Educational Development from Teachers College, Columbia University.



Our goal in sharing this information with you is to offer benchmarks for where you, your staff, and your department fall as compared to your peers.

Dear Friends of Wisnik,

We are excited to share the current findings from the 2026 Wisnik Law Firm Marketing/BD Survey with you.

This is our 13th Marketing/BD survey since 2011. The following information is based on a survey sent to all levels of legal Marketing and BD professionals at top law firms across the nation in the summer of 2026. The results that follow were generated from 245 responses from marketing & BD professionals in the New York Metro, DC, Texas, Chicago, California, and several regional markets including Philadelphia, Atlanta, and Boston. Thank you to all who participated!

Our goal in sharing this information with you is to offer benchmarks for where you, your staff, and your department fall as compared to your peers. We believe that these salary and bonus numbers reflect the current market accurately. By this, I mean that if a firm were to call tomorrow and ask us what they needed to pay a BD manager, we would confidently quote them the numbers in this report. We have found that the new jobs we have received in 2026 fall into these ranges.

We hope that you find the enclosed information valuable. Your responses to this Wisnik Law Firm Marketing/BD Survey help us to capture and confirm market trends. Please let us know if there is any way we can help you achieve your goals.

All the best,

Eva Wisnik, Shannan Buckley, & Jake Wisnik

Profile of
Law Firm Marketing & BD Professionals



Participant Response Breakdown

Total of 245 Marketing & BD professionals' salary and industry information by:



Position

- **Chief: 29**
- **Director: 91**
- **Senior Manager: 62**
- **Manager: 40**
- **Specialist*: 21**
- **Coordinator: 2****



Firm Size

- **1-100: 17**
- **101-250: 26**
- **251-500: 31**
- **501-750: 24**
- **751-1000: 36**
- **1001+: 110**



Office Size

- **1-50: 41**
- **51-100: 46**
- **101-200: 54**
- **201-300: 34**
- **301-500: 28**
- **501+: 39**



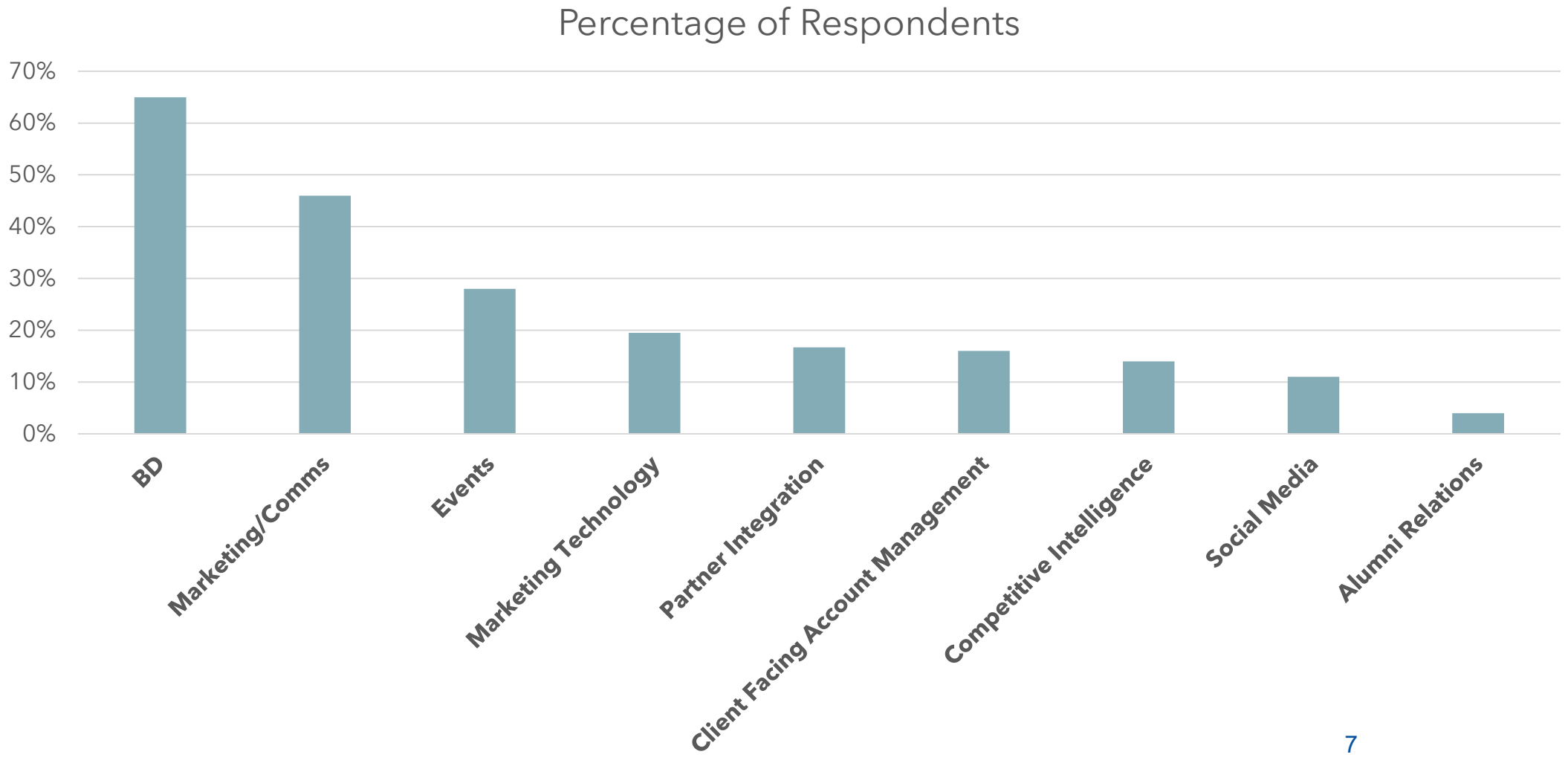
Location

- **Atlanta: 5**
- **Boston: 6**
- **Chicago: 25**
- **Los Angeles: 9**
- **New Jersey: 8**
- **New York City: 93**
- **Philadelphia: 16**
- **San Francisco Bay Area: 8**
- **Texas: 8**
- **Washington, D.C.: 34**
- **Other: 32*****

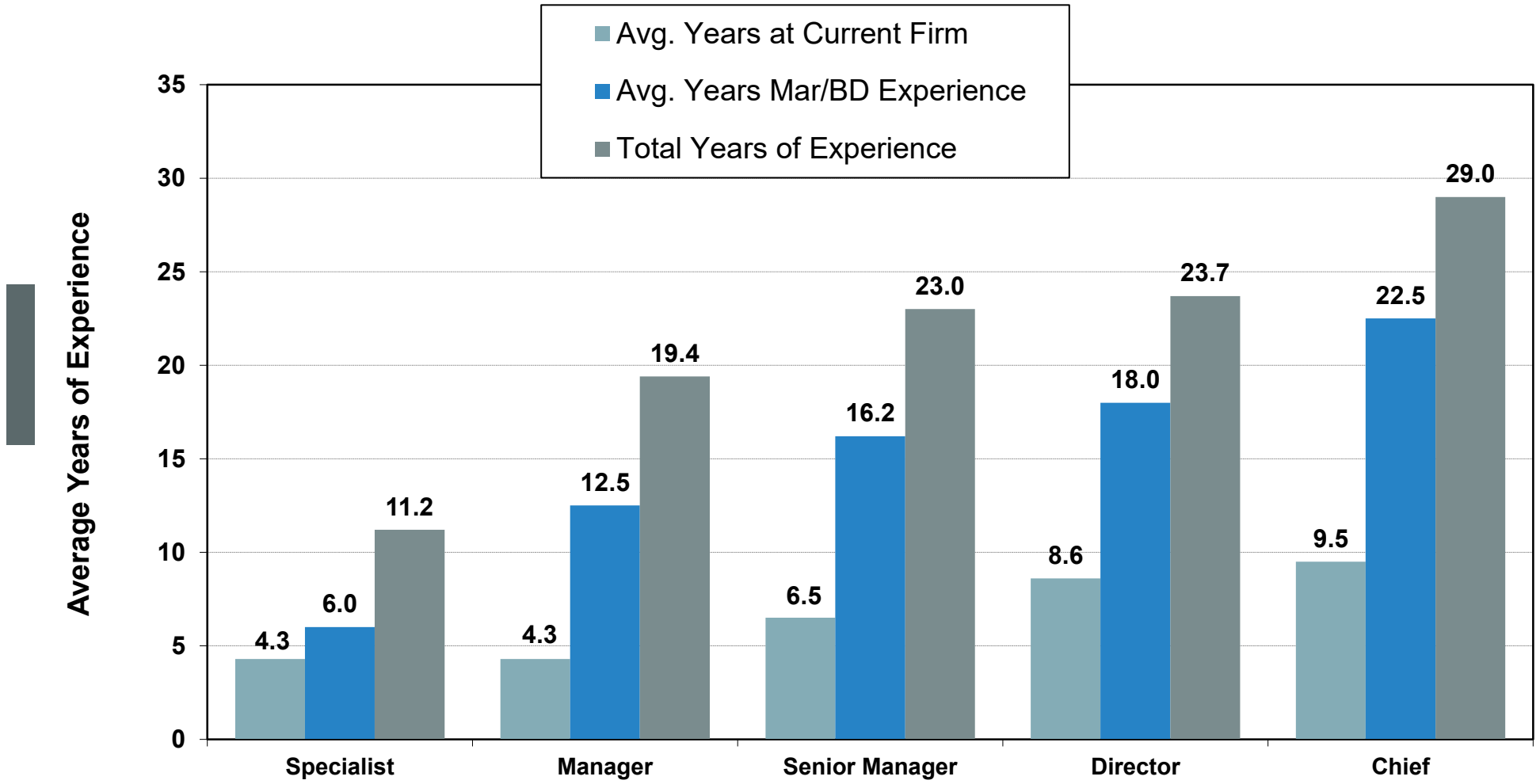
* Includes Senior Coordinators & Analysts
**These results will not be included in the breakdowns, due to insufficient data
***Includes Seattle, Denver, Florida and other smaller legal markets

Where do you spend most of your time?

* Respondents could select up to 3



Average Years of Experience

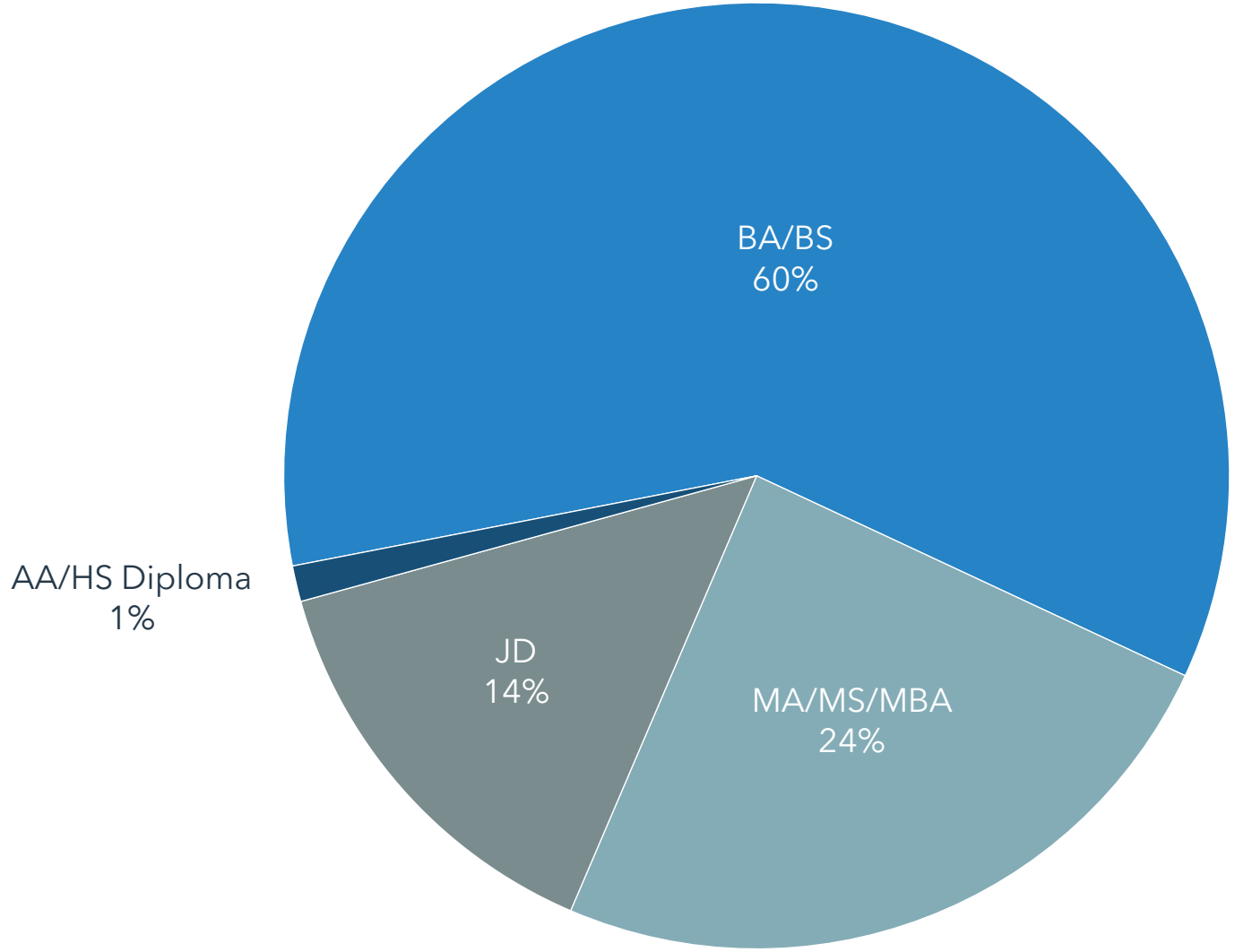


Chief tenures at their current firms have gone up significantly since the last survey, from 6.0 years in 2024 up to 9.5 in 2026.

Current tenure includes those who were promoted internally to CMO.

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Respondents' Highest Level of Education



Average level of education has stayed the same over the past decade. In 2016, 60% had a bachelor's degree, 16% had a JD and 22% had a master's degree.

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Salary Trends



National Average Salaries, By Title

Title (# responses with salary data)	Average Salary	Median	25%-75% Range
Chief (25):	$513,020	$490,000	$415k-$650k
Director (82):	$275,572	$268,026	$237k-$300k
Sr. Manager (60):	$213,835	$201,750	$185k-$240k
Manager (35):	$170,542	$170,000	$155k-$182k
Specialist (21):	$114,259	$116,713	$100k-$126k

Changes in average salaries since 2024 survey:
Chiefs: 37.0% increase
Directors: 15.8% increase
Sr. Manager: 9.5% increase
Manager: 15.1% increase
Specialist/Sr. Coordinator: 16.6% increase

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New York: Average Salaries, By Title

Title (# responses with salary data)	Average Salary	Median	25%-75% Range
Chief (8):	$603,125	$600,000	$495k-$680k
Director (31):	$294,322	$280,000	$250k-$335k
Sr. Manager (25):	$223,940	$225,000	$200k-$250k
Manager (17):	$179,117	$175,000	$164k-$184k
Specialist (7):	$129,514	$123,000	$119k-$135k

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DC: Average Salaries, By Title

Title (# responses with salary data)	Average Salary	Median	25%-75% Range
Chief (5):	$475,375	$450,000	$415k-$485k
Director (6):	$276,250	$257,000	$225k-$300k
Sr. Manager (7):	$241,642	$237,000	$225k-$275k
Manager (8):	$167,625	$171,000	$155k-$182k
Specialist (6):	$108,737	$108,500	$101k-$116k

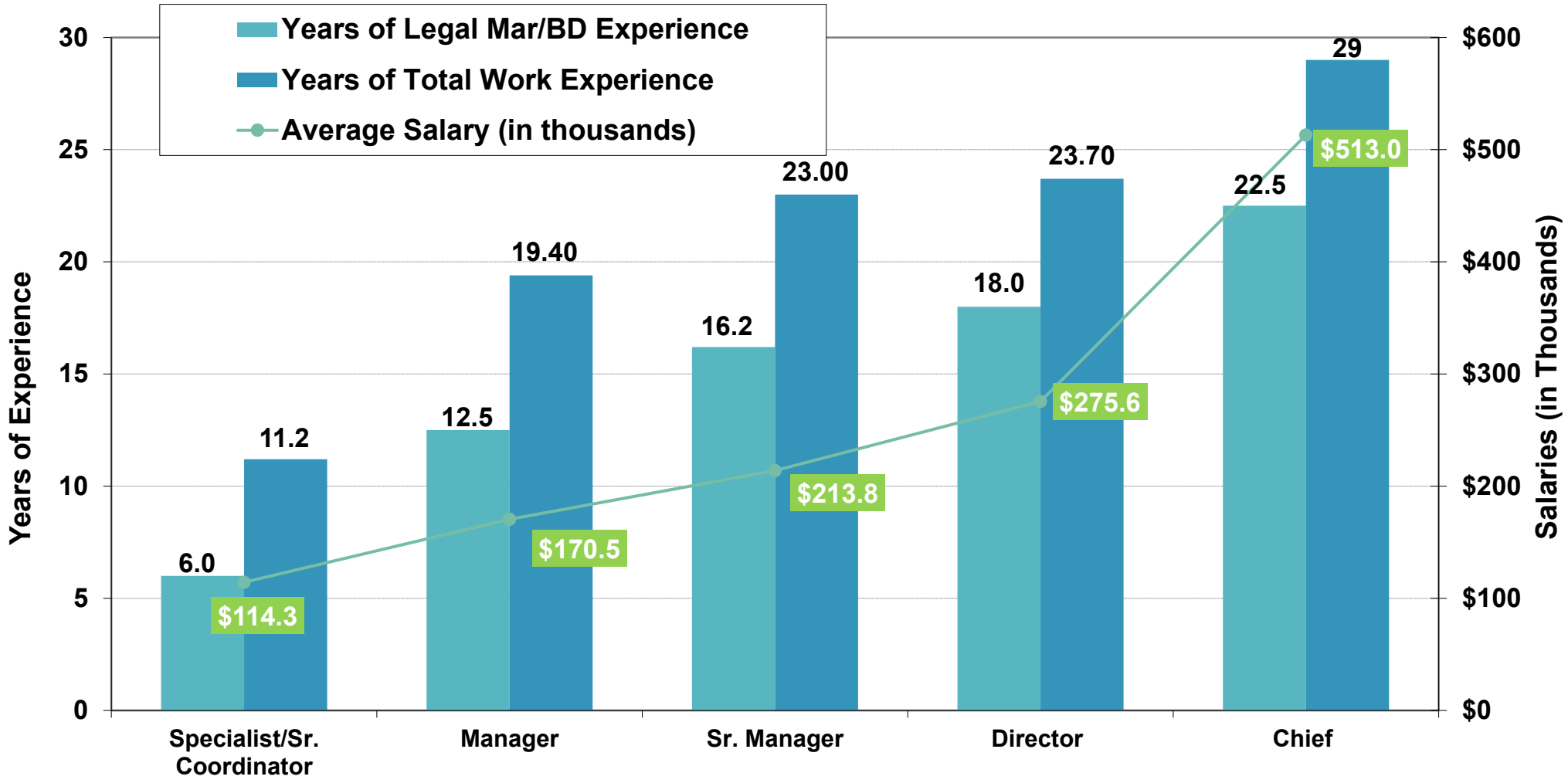
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Chicago: Average Salaries, By Title

Title (# responses with salary data)	Average Salary	Median	25%-75% Range
Director (9):	$269,127	$271,150	$230k-$290k
Sr. Manager (6):	$206,000	$209,000	$192k-$237k

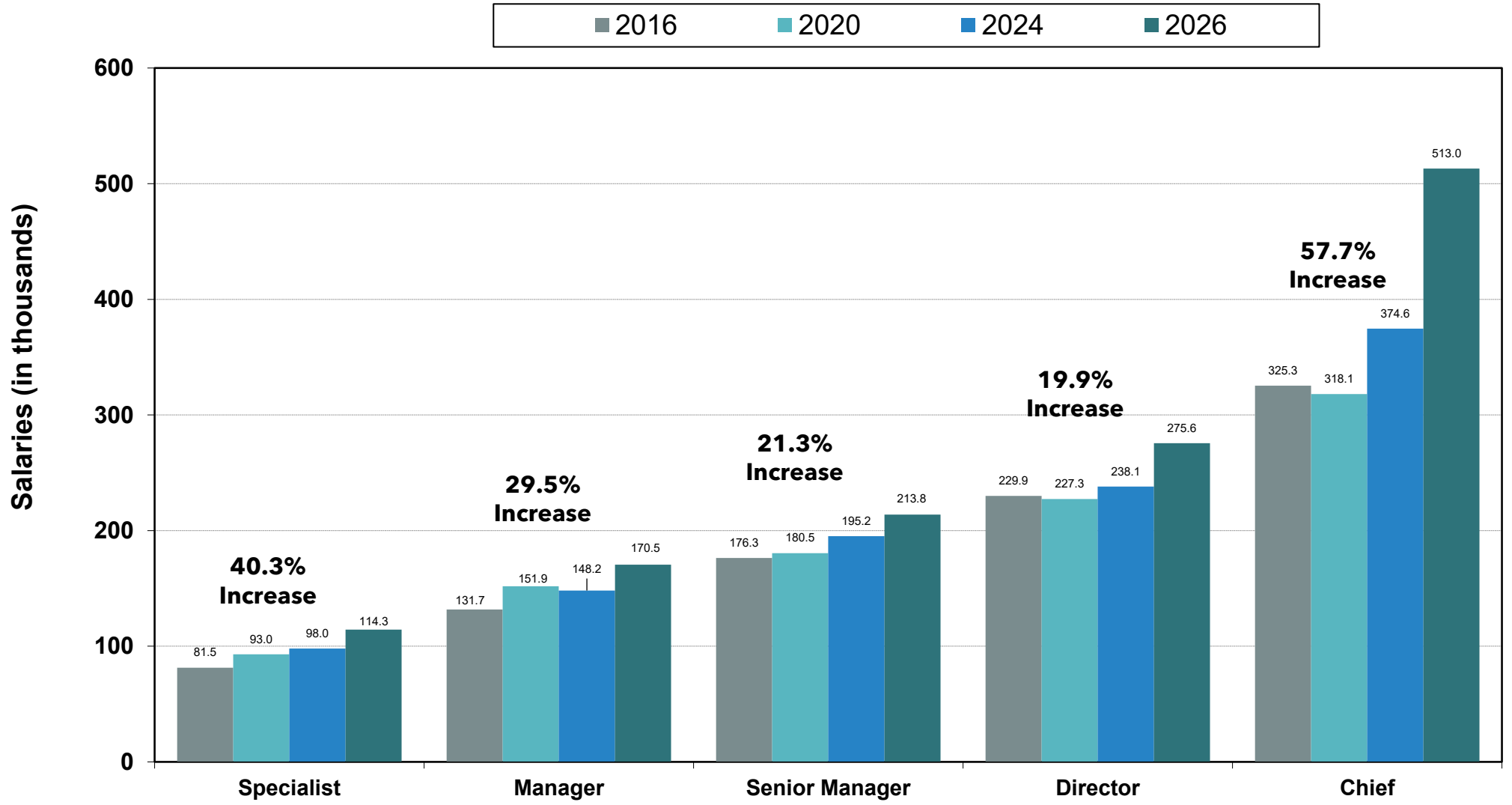
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Average Salary vs. Average Years of Experience



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Salary Trends: 2016-2026

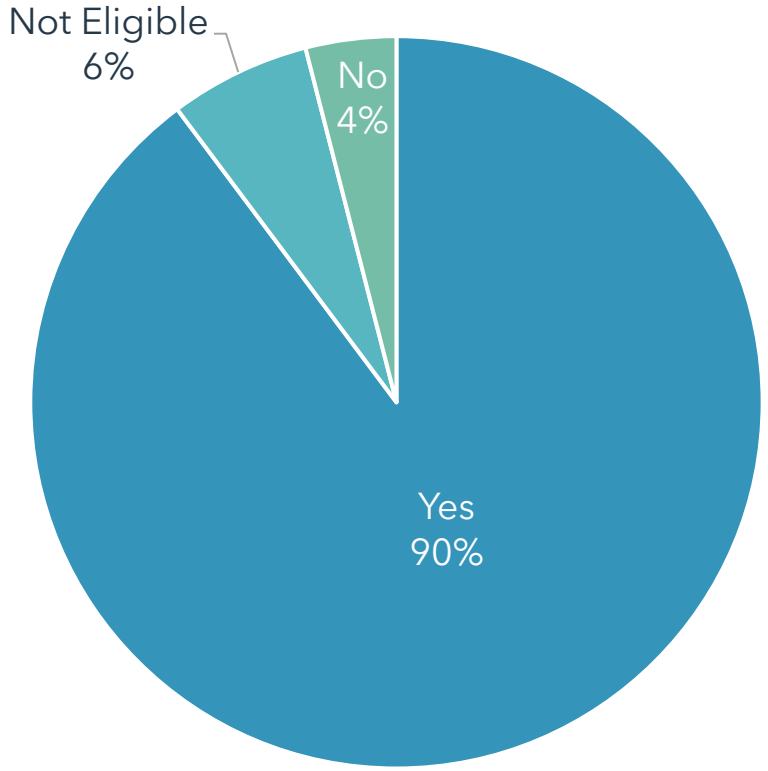


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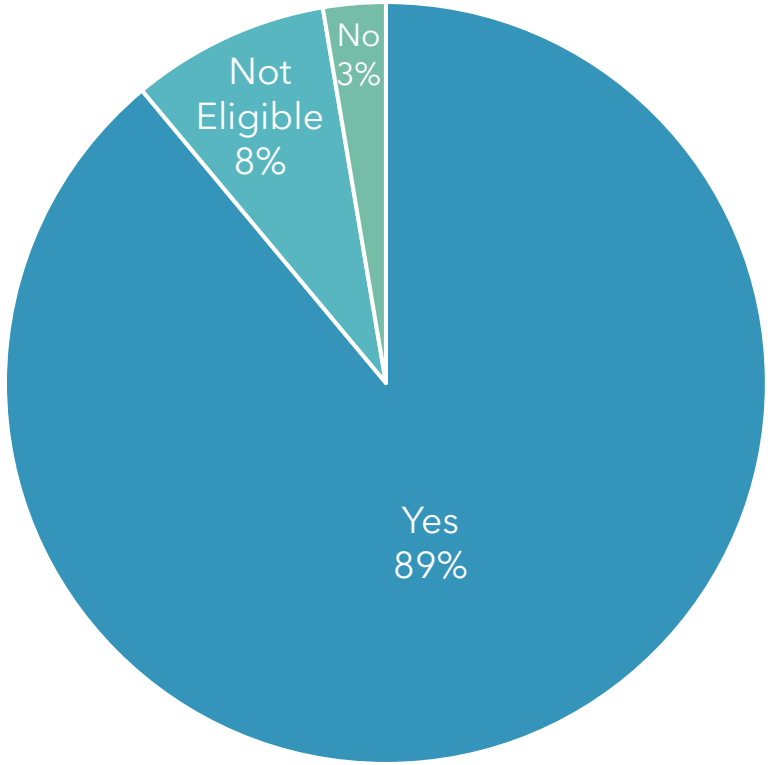
Bonuses & Raises

The vast majority of law firm marketing/BD professionals received both a bonus and a raise in the past year.

Did You Receive a Bonus In the Past Year?



Did You Receive a Raise in the Past Year?



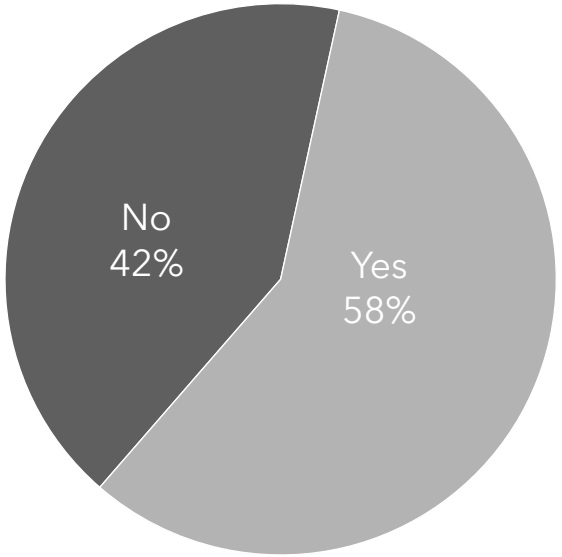
National Average: Bonus & Raise 2026 to 2024 Comparison

Title	Average Bonus ('26)	Average Raise ('26)	Average Bonus ('24)	Average Raise ('24)
Chief:	$90,695	5.6%	$66,562	5.8%
Director:	$31,965	5.6%	$30,445	4.4%
Sr. Manager:	$16,202	4.3%	$16,634	5.6%
Manager:	$9,716	4.6%	$8,429	5.6%
Specialist:	$5,618	4.6%	$4,973	5.9%

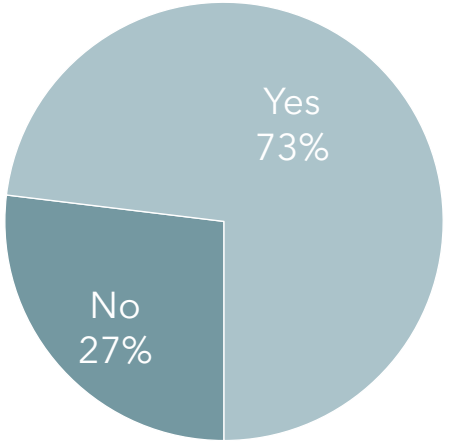
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Are You Satisfied With Your Current Compensation?

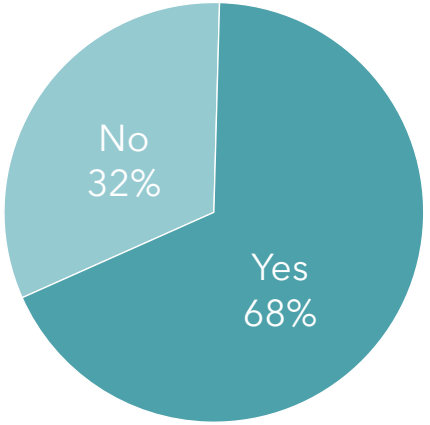
Overall



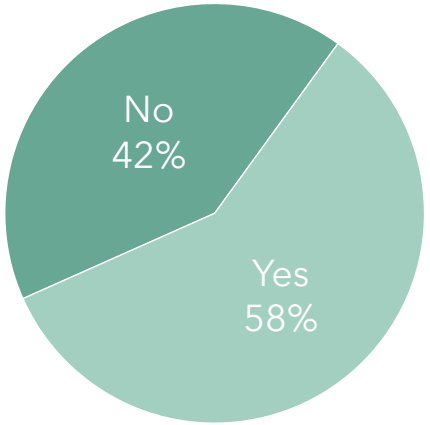
Chief



Director



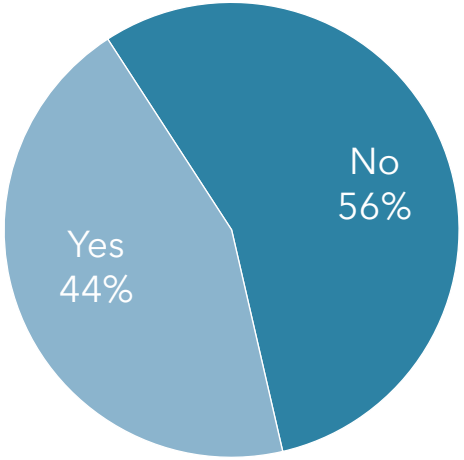
Sr. Manager



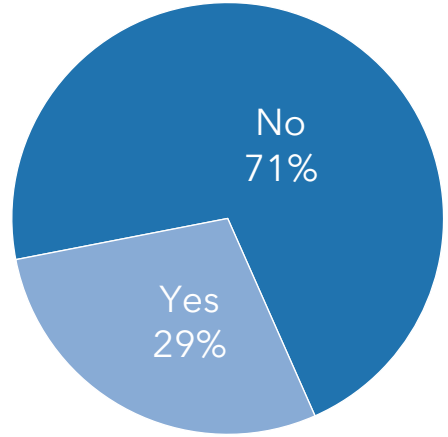
Overall salary satisfaction has risen from 56% in 2024 to 58% in 2026.

64% in Chicago are satisfied with their salaries, compared with 50% in New York and 53% in DC.

Manager



Specialist



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Average Salary, Bonus, & Raise by Firm Size

Chiefs: 25

Avg. Salary: *$513,020* ***Median Salary:*** *$490,000*

Avg. Bonus: *$90,695* ***Avg. Raise:*** *5.6%*

Firm Size:	**101-250**	**251-500**	**501-1000**	**1001+**
Average Salary:	$407,750	$480,000	$550,571	$607,500
Median:	$380,750	$480,000	$530,000	$650,000
Average Bonus:	$67,333	$56,400	$66,667	$166,667
Average Raise:	*4.6%*	*4.3%*	*4.4%*	*8.4%*

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Average Salary, Bonus & Raise by Firm Size

All Directors: 82

Avg. Salary: *$275,572* ***Median Salary:*** *$268,026*

Avg. Bonus: *$31,965* ***Avg. Raise:*** *5.6%*

Firm Size:	1-100	101-250	251-750	751-1000	1000+
Average Salary:	$249,000	$271,000	$248,950	$235,000	$291,778
Median:	$243,500	$275,000	$245,000	$250,000	$285,000
Bonus:	$37,500	$33,222	$27,000	$27,750	$34,029
Raise:	5.6%	5.3%	5.4%	8.4%	4.6%

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Average Salary, Bonus & Raise by Firm Size

All Sr. Managers: 60

Avg. Salary: *$213,835* ***Median Salary:*** *$201,750*

Avg. Bonus: *$16,202* ***Avg. Raise:*** *4.3%*

Firm Size:	**1-250**	**251-500**	**501-750**	**751-1000**	**1001+**
Average Salary:	$179,071	$194,566	$210,500	$229,667	$221,604
Median:	$175,000	$192,000	$205,000	$228,500	$225,000
Average Bonus:	$12,750	$11,875	$12,701	$16,268	$20,000
Average Raise:	4.1%	4.9%	3.7%	4.6%	4.2%

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Average Salary, Bonus & Raise by Firm Size

All Managers: 35

Avg. Salary: *$170,542* ***Median Salary:*** *$170,000*

Avg. Bonus: *$9,716* ***Avg. Raise:*** *4.6%*

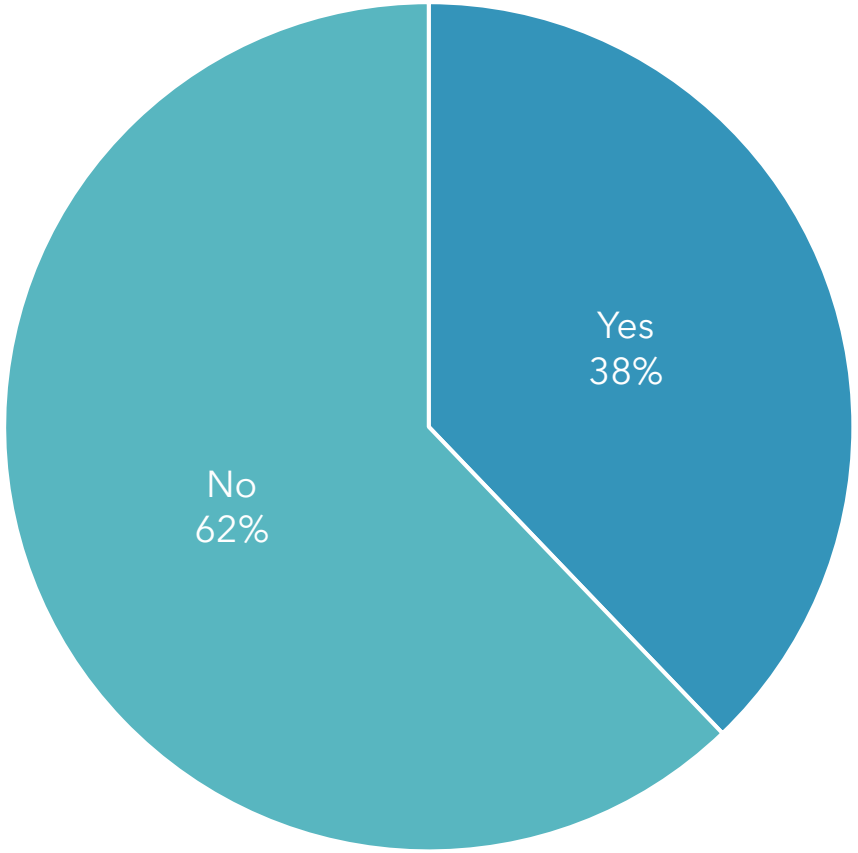
Firm Size:	**1-750**	**750+**
Average Salary:	$153,909	$178,304
Median:	$155,000	$175,000
Average Bonus:	$10,000	$9,595
Average Raise:	4.4%	4.6%

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Hiring Trends

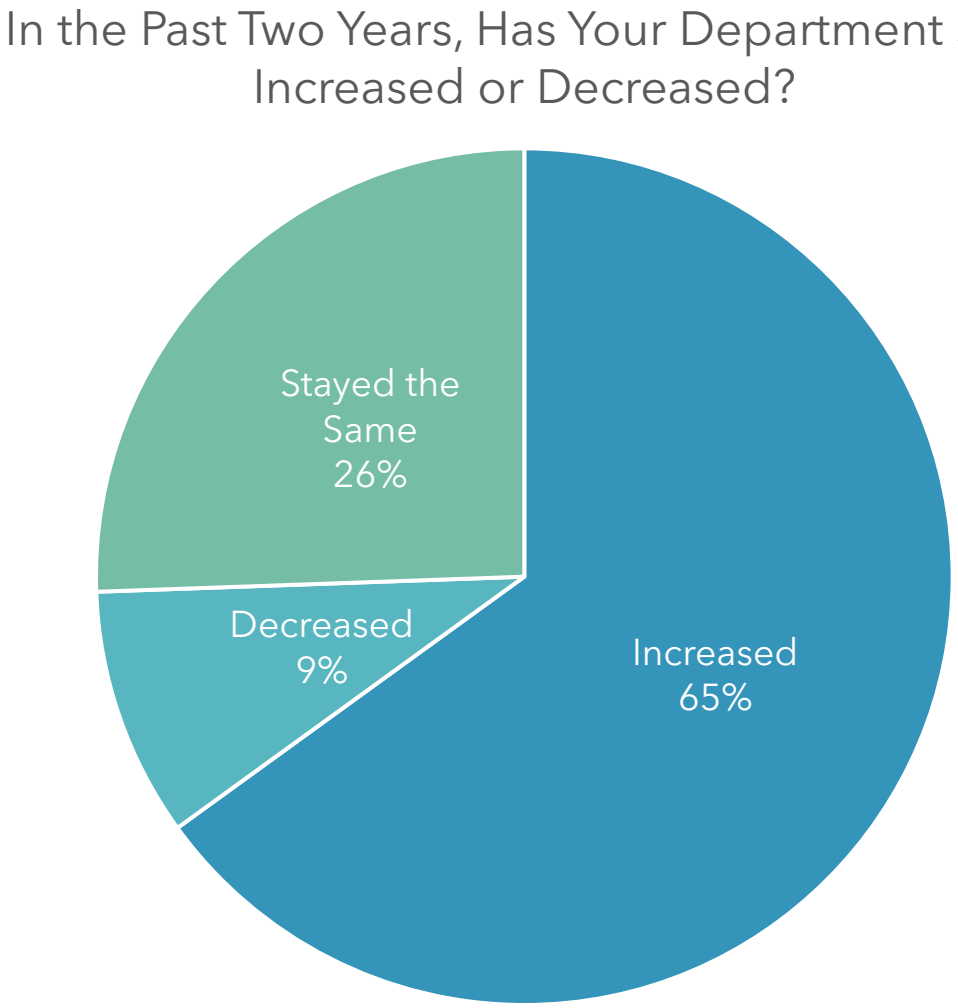


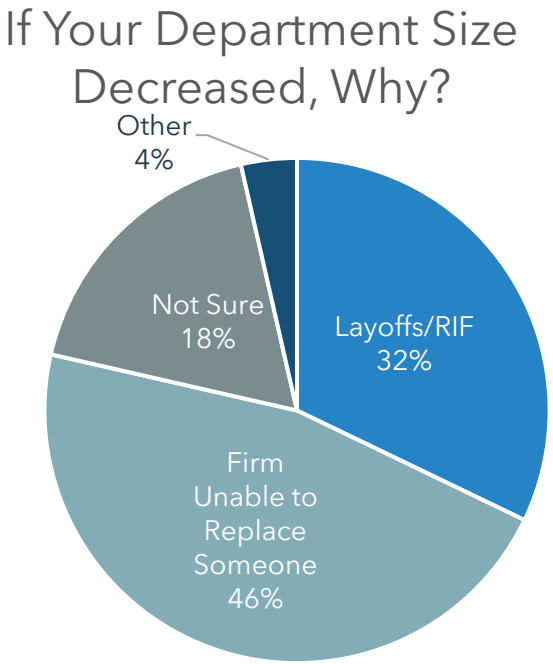
Is Your Department Adequately Staffed?



Understaffing is one of the biggest challenges facing marketing and BD departments. Respondents pointed to firms increasing attorney headcount without increasing marketing headcount.

In the Past Two Years, Has Your Department Size Increased or Decreased?



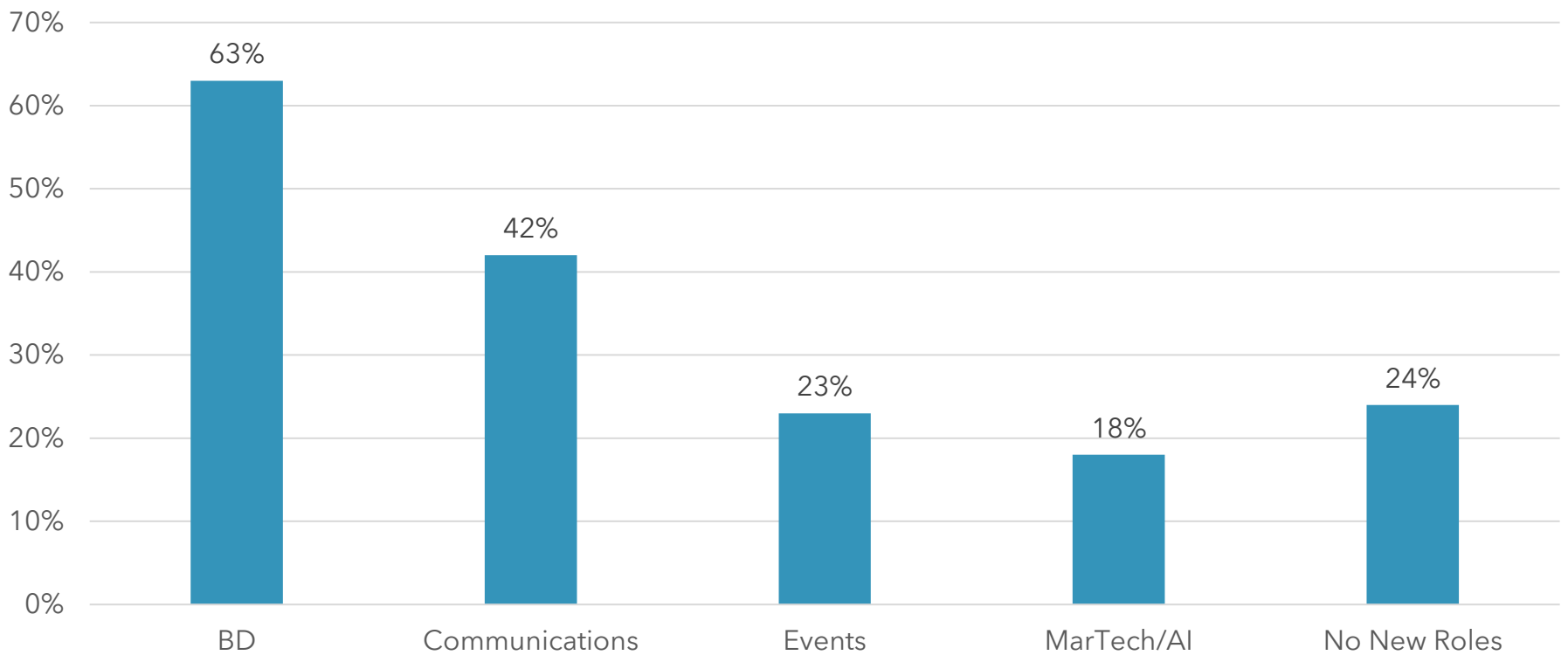


In 2024, 55% of respondents reported their department size had increased. This rose to 65% in 2026.

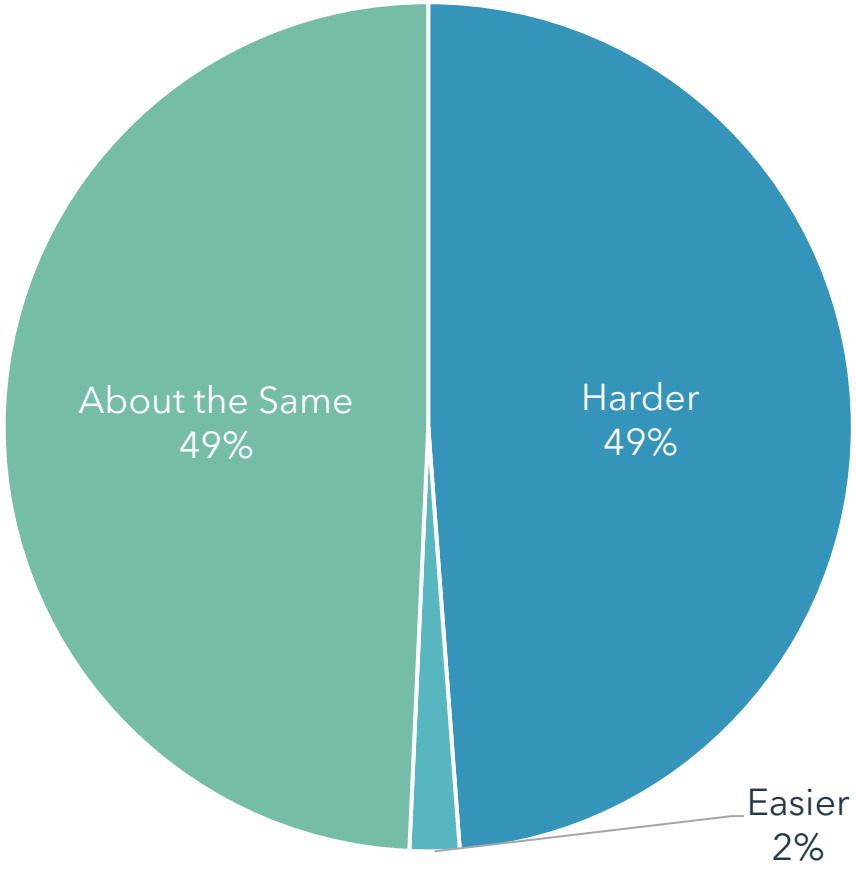
Where Did Your Department Add New Roles?

** Responses from Directors & CMOs. Respondents could select more than 1*

When firms added new roles, they invested in BD talent. 63% of Directors & CMOs said their firm added at least one new BD role.



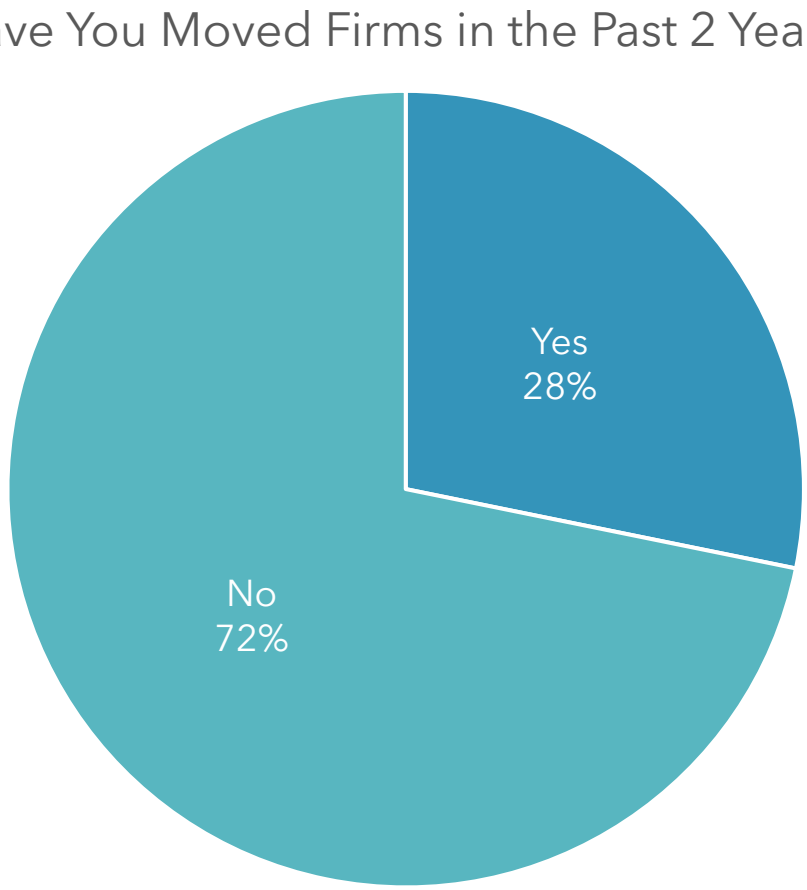
Has It Become Easier or Harder to Hire Marketing/BD Talent in the Past 2 Years?

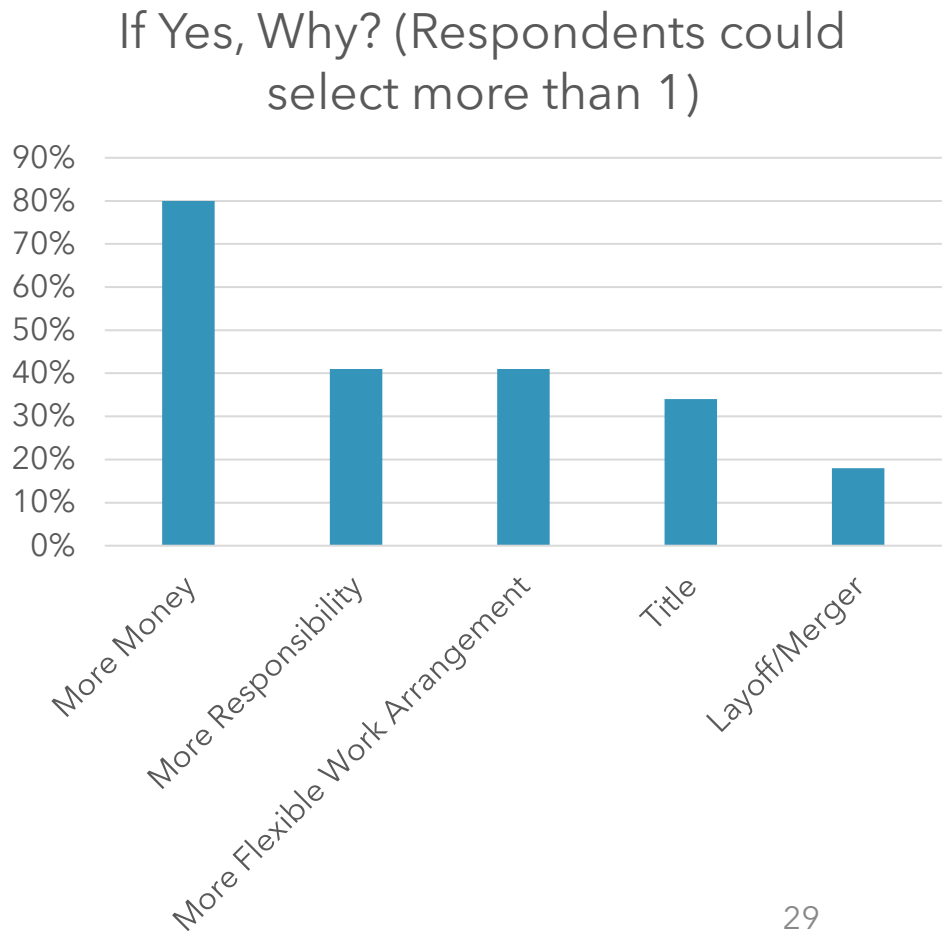


Respondents in DC reported having the hardest time hiring marketing/BD talent, with 63% saying it has become harder in the past 2 years.

Have You Moved Firms in the Past 2 Years?

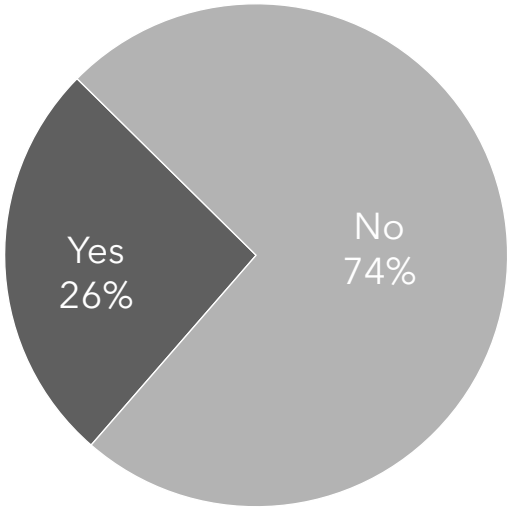
In 2024, a similar 27% of respondents reported moving firms in the previous two years.



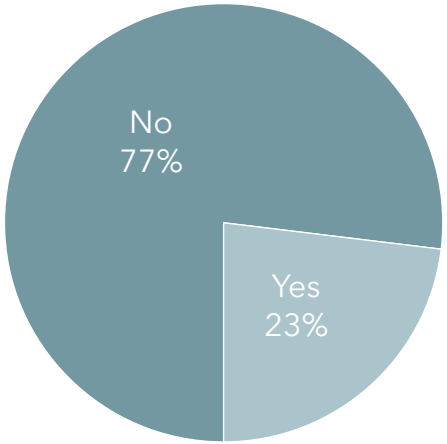


In the Past 2 Years, Have You Had a Promotion with a Title Change?

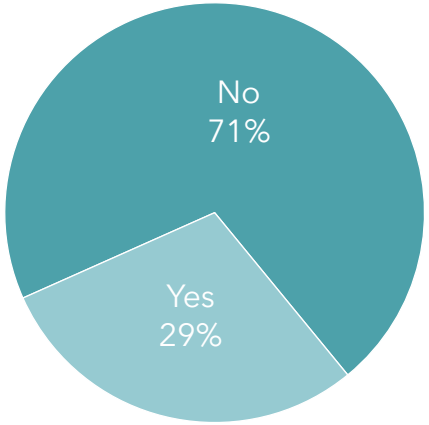
Overall



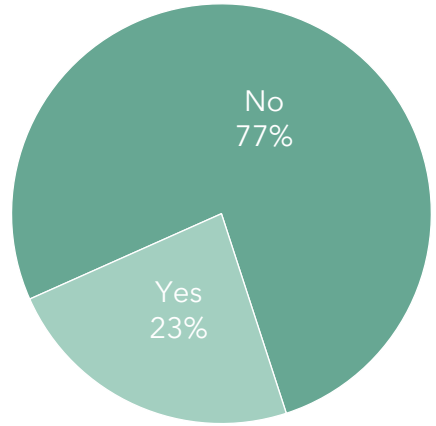
Chief



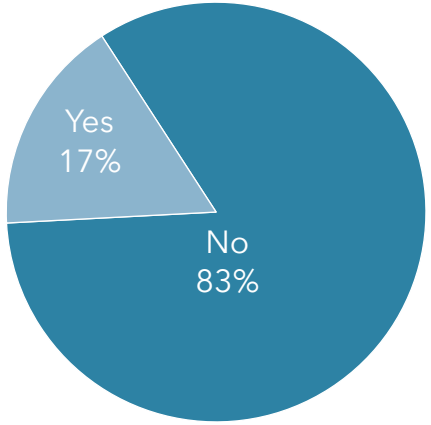
Director



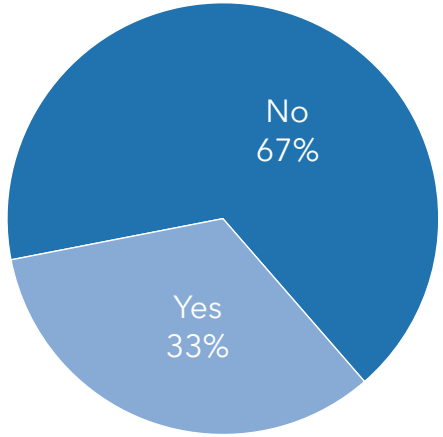
Sr. Manager



Manager



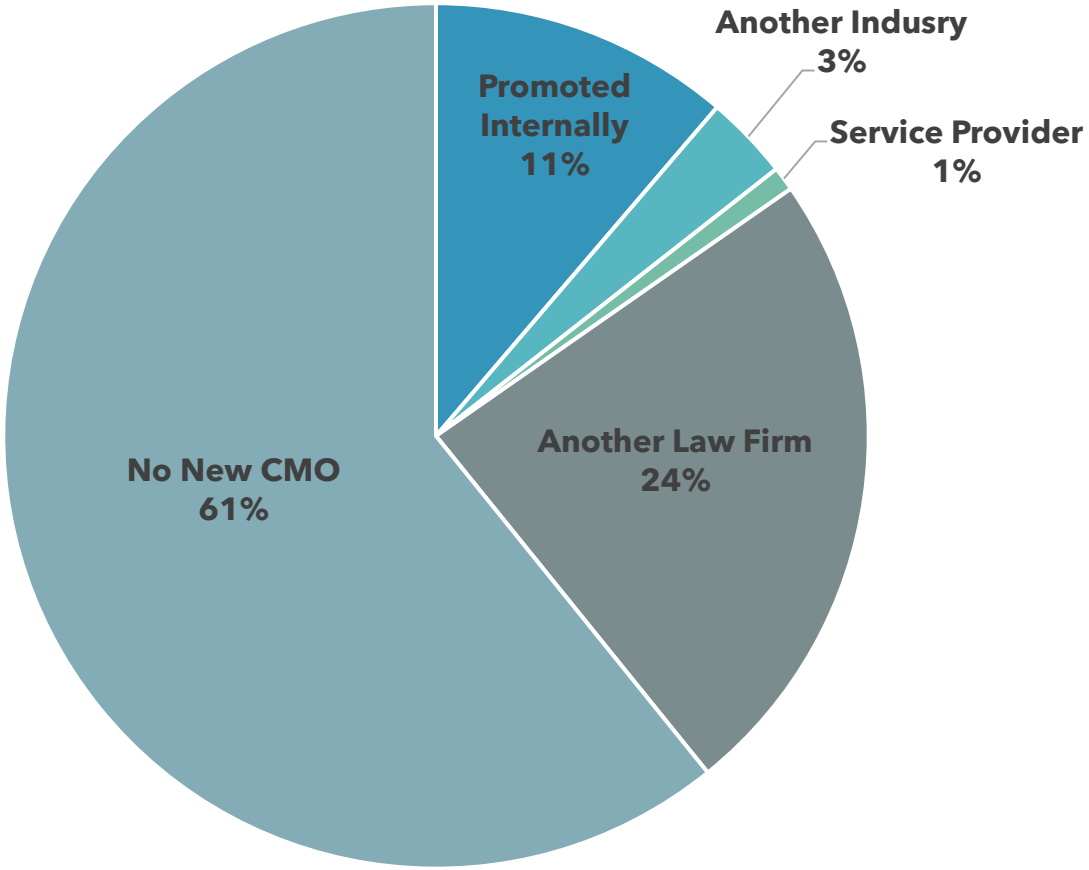
Specialist



Of those who did not get promoted with a title change, a third reported that they had been at their firm for less than two years.

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If Your Firm Hired a CMO in the Past Two Years, Where Did They Come From?

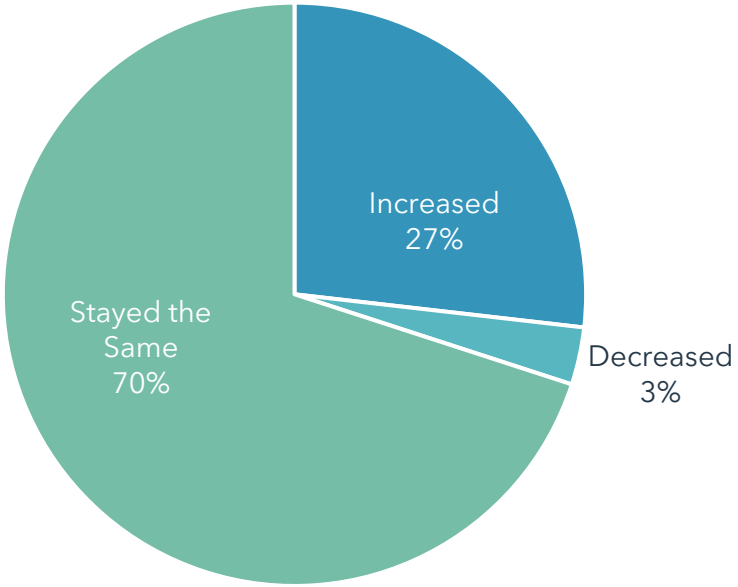


Industry Trends



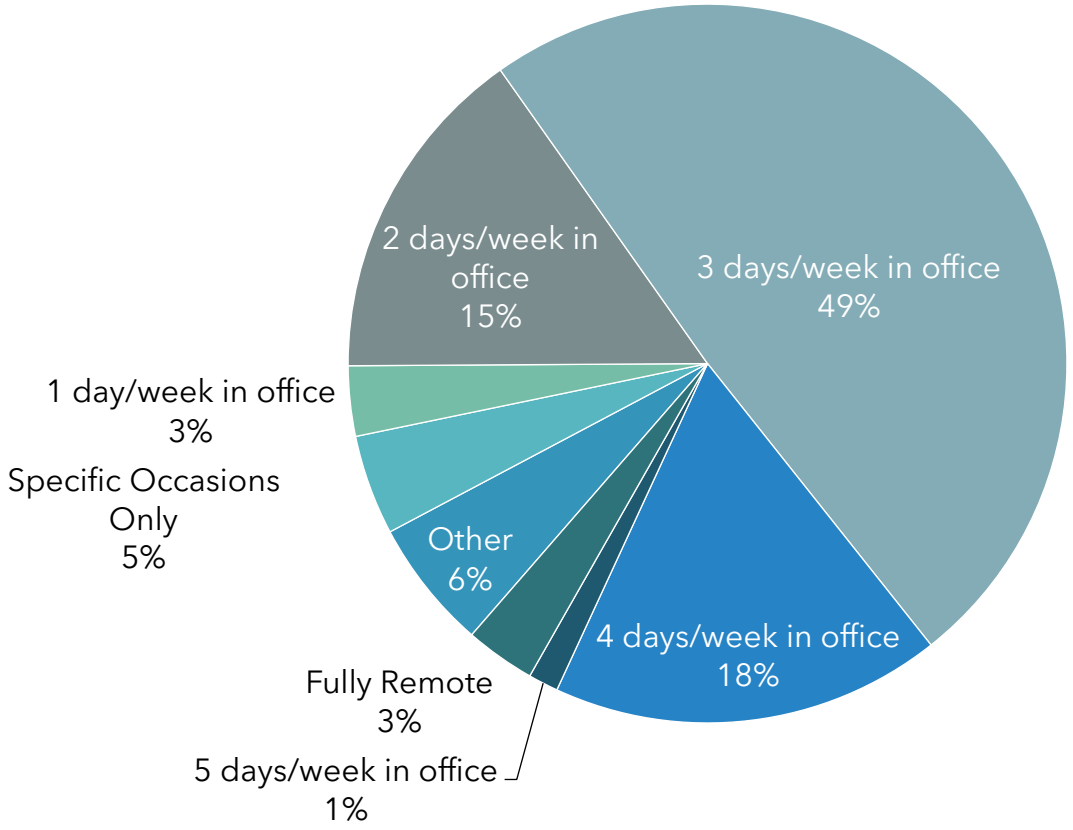
Changes in In-Person Requirements

Has Your Firm's In-Person Requirement Changed in the Past 18 Months?



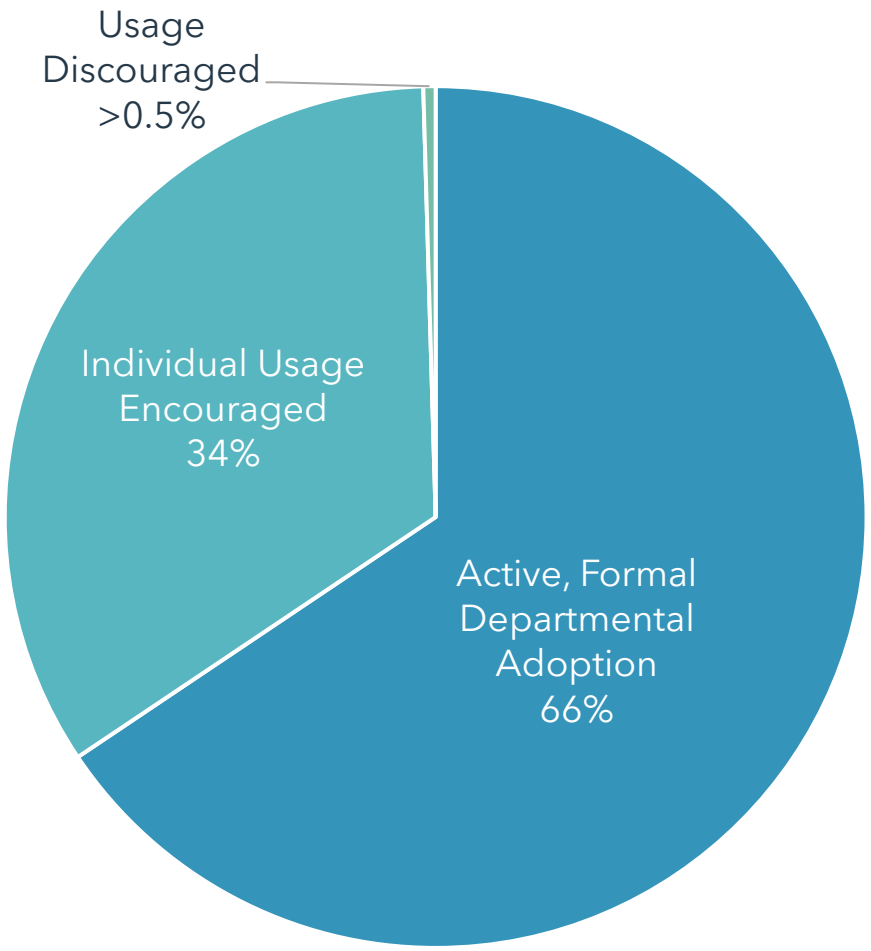
In-person requirements have been increasing over the past 18 months and remote roles remain only a small portion of roles (3%).

What is Your Firm's In-Person Requirement?



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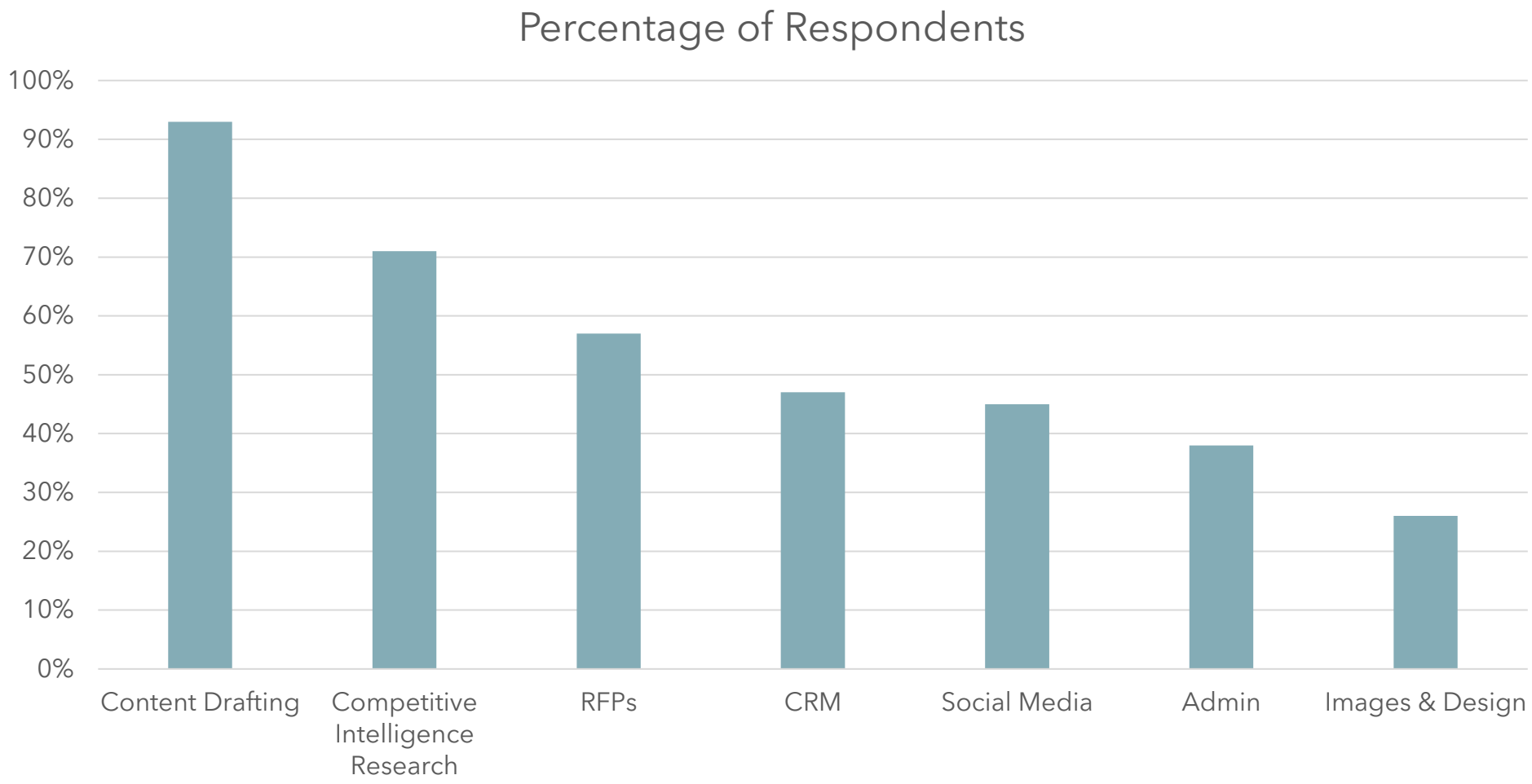
How Would You Best Describe Your Firm's Approach to AI Adoption?



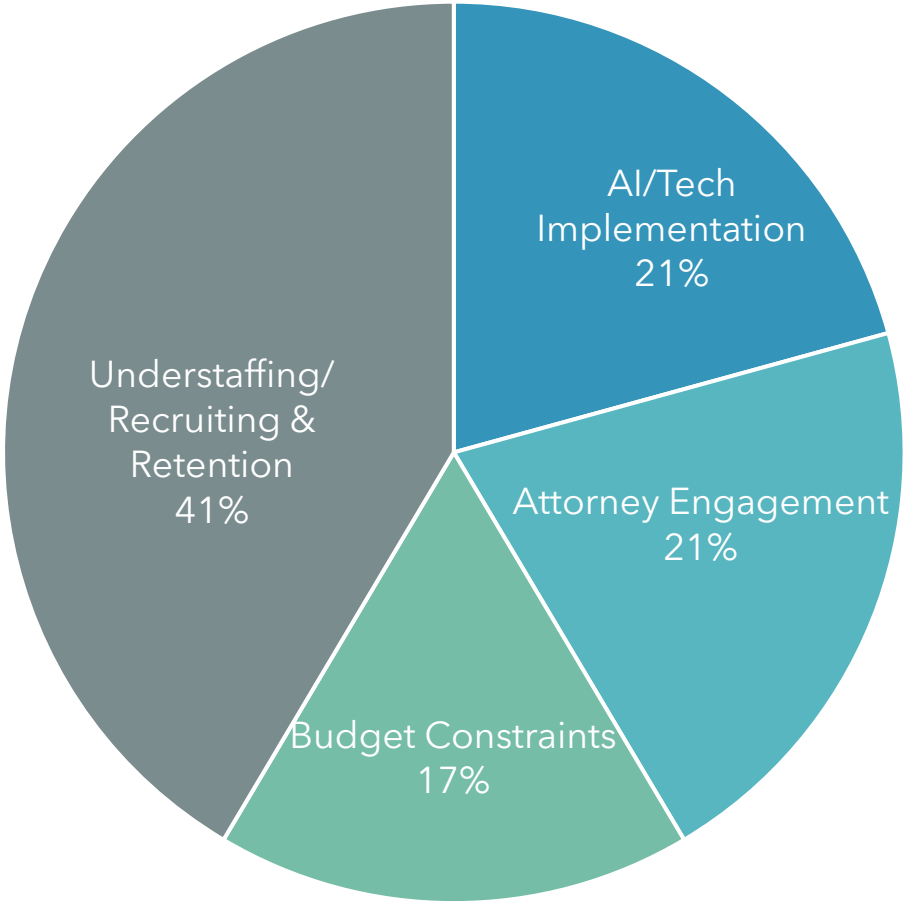
Almost every firm is adopting AI, either at the departmental or individual level.

How do you use AI?

* Respondents could select up to 3

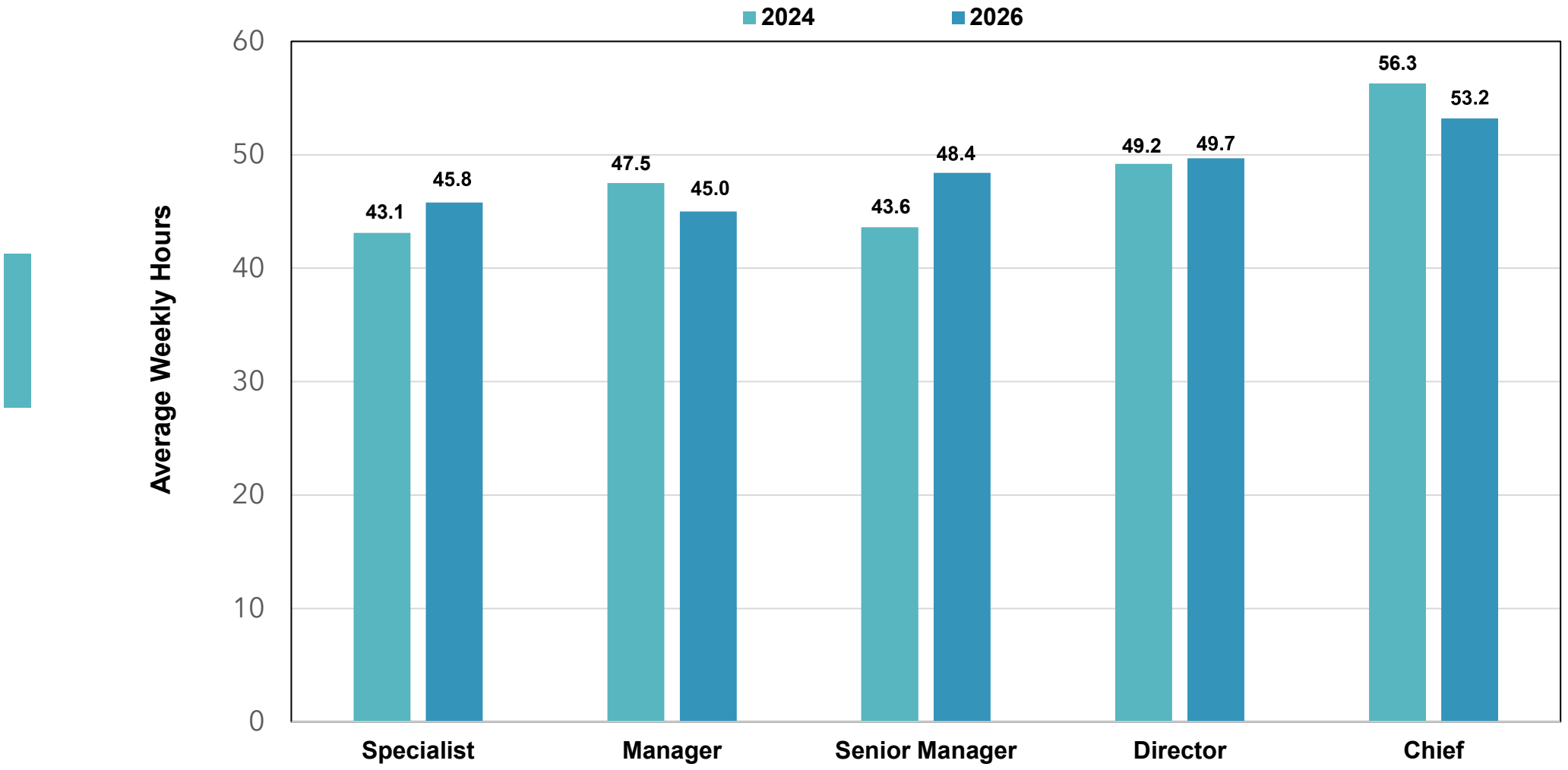


What is the single biggest challenge facing your Marketing & Business Development department today?



Understaffing/Recruiting & retaining talent was reported as the biggest challenge facing marketing/BD departments

Comparison of Average Hours Worked Per Week 2024 vs. 2026



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Interesting Survey Results

62% of respondents believe their department is inadequately staffed

27% of respondents reported their firm's in office requirement has increased in the past 18 months

99% of respondents said their department has either formally adopted AI or encourages individual usage

39% of respondents said their firm hired or promoted a new CMO in the past two years

$$$

80%

Of those who moved jobs did so for an increased salary

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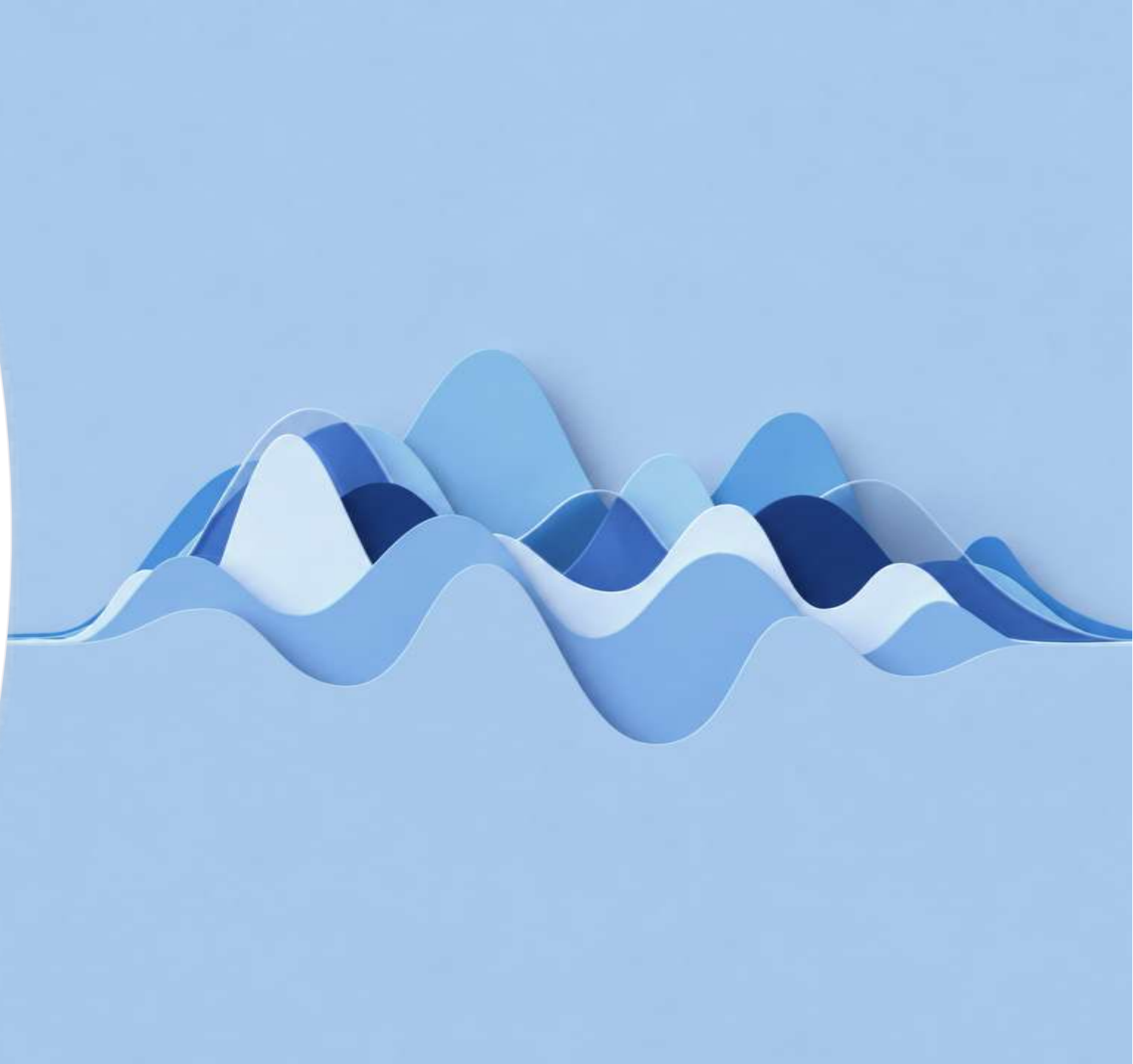






Law Firm Marketing & Business Development Salary Survey

Fall 2026



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