

A microscopic cross-section of a plant stem, showing concentric rings of cells on the left and elongated vascular bundles on the right. The image is overlaid with a dark blue gradient that is most prominent on the right side.

DALTON HANDLEY

# 2021/22 Salary guide and market trends

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Business development, marketing  
and communications



Drawing on over 30 years' combined recruitment and business development experience and strong networks, we compile and analyse comprehensive year-on-year (YoY) data to advise you of the most accurate, current and informative salary ranges for roles across professional services in Australia.

Our 2021 salary guide continues with the previous theme, with added commentary on market trends and insights. We provide key observations and drivers of change, up-to-date salary data and further analysis of roles in the top 10 law firms. This guide covers business development (BD), marketing and communications professionals across legal, accounting, consulting and engineering in Australia.

For reference, 'Big-6' refers to Allens, Ashurst, Clayton Utz, Herbert Smith Freehills, King & Wood Mallesons and MinterEllison. 'Big-4' refers to Deloitte, EY, KPMG and PwC.

## Key observations and drivers of change

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Firms performed well during COVID-19, but caution-driven hiring freezes left busy and under-resourced teams stretched. Demand for talent is high and candidates are motivated to move. FY2021 was busy. FY2022 is set to be even busier.

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Salaries in legal have increased across all levels, with the largest increases occurring at the Senior Manager (7.4%), Director or CMO (2.3%) and Advisor (2.3%) levels. We don't expect Coordinator, Advisor or Senior Advisor salaries to continue to rise given the large increases at these levels over the past five years.

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Outside of law, we saw increases at the Associate Director (8.1%), Manager (4.6%) and Coordinator (3.4%) levels, most of which is being driven by more sophisticated engineering teams.

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Restructures are occurring across legal with notable headcount allocated to senior client and sector experts.

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Firms are hiring early and moving quickly to secure talent, sometimes months in advance to prepare for improving market conditions and hiring freezes lifting.

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Boutique and mid-tier firms are aggressively hiring to secure talent from (and before) larger firms.

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Sophisticated firms were talent pooling, even during recruitment pauses, to elevate their brand in the market and cherry pick the best talent.

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The rollout of firms' strategies for 2023 is driving a reallocation of headcount and future growth.

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Since our last salary guide, we have observed a 7.4% increase at the Senior Manager level in law firms, which is a combined 15% increase over the past two years and consistent with the growth in senior sector and newly created client roles. Firms are paying a premium for these specialists.

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Comparing the top 10 law firms by partner size to other firms, the salary gap at the Senior Manager level has closed to just 1%, down from 6.3%.

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In forward-thinking firms, we are seeing new titles emerge such as Senior Advisor, Lead, Portfolio Manager and more Senior Manager roles. This recognises the true nature of the roles being performed and serves to both attract and retain talent.

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Some law firms are reintroducing the centralised bid function to deal with the sheer volume of requests from clients.

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On average, the Big-6 law firms have three and a half partners per BD resource. This 3.5:1 ratio demonstrates the strong level of interconnection across the firm and the significant value of BD teams.

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We anticipate significant turnover across all levels in professional services, some due to salary-driven movements between firms.

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Remote working is generally accepted across the board, however we are seeing that three days in the office is starting to become more appealing to both employers and line managers.

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# 2021 in numbers

The tables below provide an indicative guide to current salary bands for business development, marketing and communications roles across legal and other professional services in Australia.

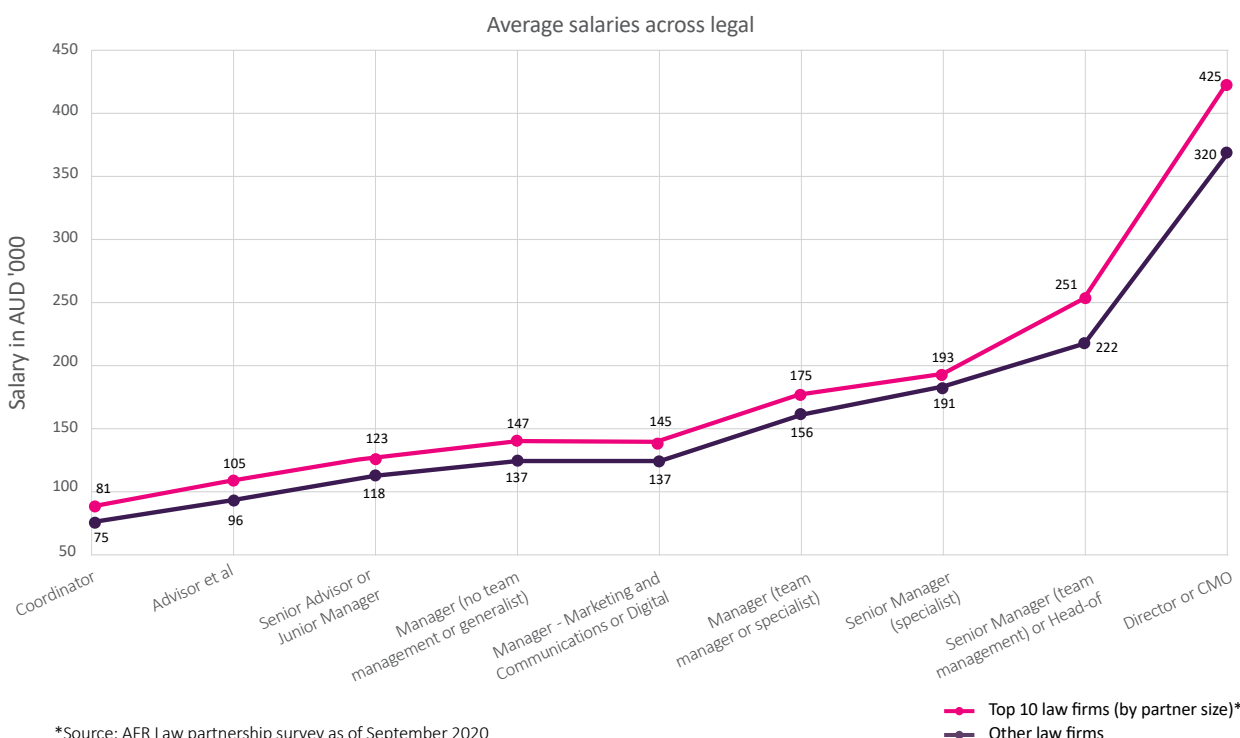
## Legal – permanent roles

Level	Min salary	Max salary	Avg. salary	% Change YoY avg. salary
Coordinator	60	100	76	1.1%
Advisor, Consultant, Specialist or Executive	75	130	97	2.3%
Senior Advisor or Junior Manager	100	140	118	0.8%
Manager (no team management or generalist)	115	190	139	0.5%
Manager - Marketing, Communications or Digital	120	190	142	1.2%
Manager (team manager or specialist)	130	200	161	0.7%
Senior Manager (specialist)	160	250	192	7.4%
Senior Manager (team management) or Head-of	165	375	233	1.1%
Director or Chief Marketing Officer (CMO)	250	550	359	2.3%

## Comparing the top 10 law firms with the rest

The chart below compares the average business development, marketing and communications salaries in legal between the top 10 law firms (by partner size)\* with others.

While the top 10 sit slightly higher across the board, it is interesting to see the gap at Senior Manager (specialist) close to just 1%. It is also worth highlighting that the average Director or CMO-level in other law firms has increased by 10% since our last salary guide.



## Other professional services – permanent roles

Level	Min salary	Max salary	Avg. salary	% Change YoY avg. salary
Coordinator	60	105	80	3.4%
Advisor, Consultant, Specialist or Executive	70	120	95	-0.3%
Manager (no team management or generalist)	110	170	136	4.6%
Manager - Marketing, Communications or Digital	100	195	141	2.7%
Associate Director or Senior Manager	140	220	172	8.1%
Director or Head-of	190	350	236	2.1%
Executive Director	275	500	345	-1.5%

## Contract and project-based work across all professional services

Level	Min hourly rate	Max hourly rate	Avg. daily rate
Executive, Specialist or Manager	75	150	600
Consultant - mid	150	300	1000
Consultant - senior	300	800	3000

### Table notes

- All figures are in AUD.
- Salary figures represent the total annual salary package (base and superannuation) and exclude bonuses and other financial rewards.
- The contract and project-based daily rate assumes an eight hour work day. Rates can vary significantly depending on project length.
- Figures, average salary data and average daily rate are based on our salary research and specialised industry knowledge.
- Role titles and levels differ across every firm.

We welcome the opportunity to confidentially discuss salary bandings with individuals, hiring managers and human resources teams. Feel free to contact the Dalton Handley team to discuss further.



to



**Big six**  
law firm ratio

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**Three and a half Partners**  
to **one BD** resource

# Industry trends

## 1 COVID-19 in reflection

The past 12-months have brought uncertainty, turbulent markets and volatility. In March 2020 recruitment across most professional services firms froze, some roles were made redundant, mostly within the Big-4, and lockdowns commenced across the country.

As cases grew around the world and supermarket shelves emptied, our days were spent talking with people. Conversations centred on activity levels, firm performance, team sentiment, pipeline, Government stimulus, global directive (for global firms), salary cuts, working from home policies and mental health. Weeks rolled into months, our conversations continued and a common theme emerged; professional services firms remained busy. Deepening client relationships was paramount and firms who genuinely care about their clients prevailed. Among BD teams, bidding activities soared, internal communications became indispensable, the need for strategic BD advice grew and digital activities consumed marketing teams.

While the world hoped for normalisation in July, then September then 2021 – we learnt to live with COVID-19 and its many restrictions.

It has now been a full year of 'working' with COVID-19 and market sentiment is strong.

The vaccine roll out has commenced, most firms have lifted recruitment freezes, teams continue to be busy, pipeline is strong and jobs are plentiful. Most of our clients have hit or exceeded their financial year target and FY23 strategies are being set.

From here, we anticipate significant turnover and new headcount across the industry.

## 2 Restructures, restructures and more restructures

While some may think that COVID-19 was the cause of team restructures, we have actually been seeing teams change across legal for a while. Here's why:

- Boutique and mid-tier firms are pursuing growth and require more sophisticated BD teams to support ambitious partners.
- Some firms are engaging senior consultants to audit functions, creating new structures and headcount and BD team strategies.
- As partners from Big-4 and consulting join law firms in senior positions, they bring fresh ideas and have different requirements from BD teams.

- With the emergence of 'new law' businesses, there are alternative opportunities for BD experts.
- There is an exceptionally strong demand for talented professionals. As multiple opportunities arise, firms must compete to attract the best talent, resulting in more compelling offers and a focus on the candidate experience.
- Most people simply need a change, especially as COVID-19 bound them to their employer and home.
- Candidates look to firms that are genuine in supporting mental health and wellbeing.

## 3 Law firms investing in senior client specialists

We have seen a sustained and growing focus on client centricity in law firms. As ambitious firms outside the legacy Big-6 compete aggressively for high-value work, their need for sophisticated BD and client experts is increasing. This has accelerated throughout COVID-19 and we are seeing greater demand for dedicated client specialists across top-tier, mid-tier and boutique firms.

Although this talent comes at a premium, additional headcount is being created to attract the best in the market, and they are coming from Tier-1 legal and Big-4 firms.

### Drivers



- Clients expect and want dedicated Client Relationship Managers (CRMs) who are not necessarily fee earners. This is a significant cultural change and, over time, has contributed to Partners seeking experienced client managers.
- Lateral Tier-1 Partner movements continues to drive competition between firms.
- A shift towards a more merit-based system and away from the lockstep Partner remuneration model (sometimes a hybrid is preferred to reduce volatility).
- Non-legacy Big-6 law firms are winning more pursuits and more complex work. Teams are growing and firm revenue is increasing, driving the need for more sophisticated client teams.
- 'New law' businesses requiring BD experts with dedicated client management experience and a strong professional network.
- BD professionals continue to seek client facing opportunities, leading to more hybrid BD/CRM roles where the CRM activities are for clients not on the firm's key client program.

## What do these functions look like?

- In smaller firms up to three CRMs and seven in larger firms.
- Budgets have stretched to accommodate packages of well over \$200,000 for these specialists, especially if they are managing a top-five client.
- Being client facing is fundamental in these roles, which can occur without a Partner present.
- Advisor-level professionals can become involved in client management as they support CRMs, which further drives hybrid BD/CRM roles.

## 4 The centralised bid function has returned to law, and now works alongside pursuits

The centralised bid function has returned to law and just at the right time. During COVID-19 bidding activities across law, engineering and accounting soared and firms continued to hire specialist bid experts right across Australia.

While engineering and Big-4 teams have never lost bids as a core function, law firms have started bringing back whole teams.

In 2018, we saw the growth of pursuits (a sophisticated and strategic approach to winning work) in some law firms. While this occurred at Manager-level, we are now seeing firms hire bid and pursuit professionals at all levels to support BD experts.

### Drivers



- The sheer volume of bidding for work has grown due to increased opportunities, procurement, compliance and risk processes.
- Increased competition from Big-4, consulting and specialist boutique firms.
- Manager-level roles have become more strategic, resulting in leaner BD teams, higher Partner expectations, true pipeline management and more bid opportunities.
- Firms are evolving and client expectations are increasing; firms now have a broader offering including project management, product development, flexible resourcing, consulting services and innovation.
- Partner savviness has also led to the increase in bidding; as they continue to pursue work there will be a growing need for tailored, relevant and winning bids.

## What do these teams look like?

- Truly centralised bid teams include 2-15 bid experts across Asia Pacific who coordinate, draft and manage all types of bids. In engineering, regional bid teams can be upwards of 20 people.
- The BD expert usually manages pursuits however some firms have centralised pursuit experts.
- Engineering and Big-4 firms usually have the largest bid teams where individuals are typically aligned to a specific sector and sit right across Australia and NZ. In law firms most bid teams sit on the East Coast.
- Salary levels range from \$65,000 to \$220,000. At the top end, these are extremely experienced professionals who either manage a team or are in standalone specialist roles.

## What does this mean for the future?

- Increased demand for high calibre bid and pursuit experts who can project manage, coordinate, coach and write compelling content.
- Storytelling and 'writing to influence' are key skills that firms want in their teams.
- Furthering best practice and strong training in winning work (e.g. Shipley) are important.
- Growth of external consultants specialised in managing large, complex and 'must-win' bids.

## 5 Opportunity-driven marketing and communications

Marketing and communication campaigns now play a crucial role in contributing to pipeline origination, sales, pursuits and, when measured effectively, direct revenue.

Strategic multi-channel campaigns targeting pipeline opportunities are becoming more important, and marketers are expected to show how these campaigns drive real revenue. In addition, new marketing roles are emerging that sit alongside sector and client leads to drive these strategic campaigns.

Internal and external communications now also play a crucial role in revenue growth. Teams are focusing on campaigns that raise awareness, generate leads and increase the firm's profile.

## Drivers



- Marketing automation, programmatic marketing, better data and a greater understanding of this data is driving the ability for marketers to be more targeted and accurately measure ROI.
- Clients expect tailored, timely and relevant campaigns that educate and inform, driving the desire for content that influences.
- Marketing, communications and BD teams are now working together to target client and sector pursuits, which is very different to the traditional siloed approach. This integrated go-to-market approach has forced teams to align by sector, which further allows greater transparency on campaign success.
- Platforms are key in measuring ROI and managing pipeline, hence the increase in firms adopting Salesforce Marketing Cloud or Microsoft Dynamics 365.



*Opportunity-driven campaigns can only be created from a focused and robust strategy. At KWM, we know our strategy; it is part of every decision by everyone in the firm. Through this, our marketing and communication strategy is very clear, and is directly linked with driving firm-wide and client-focussed opportunities – working alongside BD teams and Partners. We combine the diverse skills and experience of the team with sophisticated marketing platforms to deliver targeted insights and campaigns that are designed to support our client growth agenda.*



**Elle Lowe, Head of Communications – Global at King & Wood Mallesons.**

## 6 Bonus structures continue to vary among roles and firms

Bonuses are becoming increasingly important to keep and attract strong performers at all levels. These roles usually have set targets and KPIs, where experts can show revenue as a direct result from their BD activities.

As some firms remained cautious and removed bonuses during COVID-19, others introduced them as a way to attract and retain talent.

### What do bonuses look like?

- Across legal, accounting and engineering firms, bonuses are generally discretionary at all levels.
- For firms that pay a bonus, this usually sits between 5-10% of the total salary package and are tied to overall firm performance and individual performance using 360-degree feedback.
- The largest bonus percentage we have seen is 30% on base salary.
- Some engineering firms have profit share schemes, while others offer a higher base (circa \$300,000 for Directors) with a small discretionary bonus.
- High bonuses are usually found in Big-4 and 'new law' firms where there is a direct link to sales and performance, sometimes up to 50% of the base salary.
- Sign-on bonuses and forgone bonus compensation are more commonly used to attract talent and can be up to \$15,000.





## 7 Law has become a stable sector of choice in professional services, attracting those outside the industry

While there was some level of change across all industries during COVID-19, law remained relatively stable and has, over time, become the sector of choice. Previously, candidates were eager to leave law for financial services, accounting, consulting, education and other B2B firms, usually on a lower salary and to under-resourced teams. This has shifted considerably. We are now seeing people eager to stay in legal, increased boomerang hires and more professionals looking to move into law firms.

### Drivers

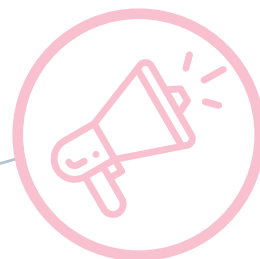


- Roles are becoming more strategic across BD, marketing and communications.
- Partners who have grown up with BD recognise the value it brings in a competitive market. They seek strategic guidance and challenge teams to be better.
- Healthy salaries and performance recognition through bonuses.
- Increased hiring of junior resources, utilising assistants and (for some firms) having access to global support teams allows teams to be more strategic and client facing.
- Law firms continue to invest in technology, systems, processes, tools and resources resulting in efficiencies and better working practices. For example, innovation hubs, 'new law' businesses, project management teams and transformation projects.

Julie Barber, Chief Marketing Officer at Allens, comments:



*At Allens, our BD and Marketing strategy has evolved significantly over recent years, as has the way we engage with the firm. We are driving client discussions, creating and pursuing growth opportunities, and are seen as trusted advisors who have our fingers on the pulse of client needs. We're motivated by delivering clients with a great experience – and that's an objective to which the whole firm is committed. It means that the mix of skills and expertise we need in the team continue to shift – we're always on the lookout for people who are curious, collaborative and motivated to deliver for clients.*



# Employer brand and the candidate experience

The firm's brand reputation, team reputation and the candidate experience are vital when hiring for your team. How firms managed COVID-19 is not just important but questioned by candidates when considering a move.

Firms are developing savvy strategies to understand their brand as an employer of choice for BD professionals. More thorough exit interviews are taking place and firms are approaching us directly to seek positive and negative feedback from the market. During our many conversations with clients, we speak openly about their reputation in the market and gather information that we can share with our network, for example exciting developments within the firm.

## Drivers



- Increased competition and firms fighting to retain good employees at all levels.
- Firms recognise the need to proactively shake off an outdated and unjust brand reputation.
- Partners see the value of high calibre BD, marketing and communications experts.
- Recent restructures across various professional services firms have created an even greater need for stability within teams.

## What do these strategies look like?

- Faster recruitment processes (e.g. max two interviews), especially at junior levels.
- Generating excitement by having senior team members play a part in recruiting at all levels.
- Coaching Partners to impress during interviews and genuinely sell the firm and role.
- Using the interview process, sometimes through informal coffees, as a firm branding exercise before a role is signed off. This allows positive messages to be shared with potential candidates that will be disseminated into the market.
- Highlighting case study examples of success stories within the team, such as multiple promotions or overseas moves.
- BD and marketing leaders becoming advocates for their firm by speaking at leading industry events.
- Offering further flexibility and a great work-life balance. For example, working four days in five to allow for late starts/leaving early arrangements.



*Building a brand takes time and I believe people; our team and our clients, are our most important assets. We continue to be advocates for the firm because we believe in ourselves, each other and what HSF stands for. It is truly inspiring to be part of a motivated, intelligent, empathetic and high-performing team of BD, professional colleagues and experienced lawyers who are always looking to the future, and this is illuminated to everyone we encounter. Connecting with peers, being involved in the industry, a respectful and collaborative nature and generally being curious are some attributes I look for when hiring into the team.*



**Chele Dore, Chief Business Development Officer at Herbert Smith Freehills.**

# Attract, engage and retain during 2021 and beyond

To remain competitive in this busy and turbulent recruitment environment, we strongly encourage our clients to consider how to attract, engage and retain top talent. Some consideration points based on discussions with candidates are below.



## Attract

- Both the firm's brand and team reputation are equally important.
- Salaries must now meet the market; good candidates have many options to choose from.
- Support resources and infrastructure are valued more than ever; under-resourced team members become reactive and leave firms.
- Create appeal beyond the traditional opportunity such as client facing responsibilities.
- Talent pool to raise your profile and define your brand, disseminate messages to the market by meeting candidates in advance of the need arising.



## Engage

- Ensure a good candidate interview experience; run smooth and quick recruitment processes with regular communication.
- Partners must play a role in engaging senior professionals.
- Mould roles around people you want in your team, you can teach skills but not attitude or cultural fit.
- Keep in touch with exceptional candidates in your talent pool.



## Retain

- Provide continuous learning and development opportunities.
- Give people stretch opportunities before they ask for them.
- Pay market rate and reward performance, particularly for long-standing team members.
- Create additional title bands and offer additional responsibility such as key clients to manage.
- Create bonus structures for high performers.
- Know your team and what drives them long term.
- Be clear on differentiation – title, salary and focus.
- Partners must demonstrate the value they place on the team.



**DALTON**HANDLEY

## About us

Dalton Handley is a specialist recruitment and advisory firm, dedicated to sourcing business development, client relationship management, pursuits, marketing and communications talent across B2B services industries, with particular strength in professional services.

With over 30 years' combined experience in specialist recruitment and client-side business development roles, the Dalton Handley team provides tailored advice to both professionals and employers.

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