

2018 Legal Sales Uncovered: Salary & Trends Survey

Article By:

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[The Legal Sales and Service Organization](#) is set to release its annual report tracking the emerging field of sales in law firms, written in connection with [Hellerman Communications](#). The report provides insight into the state of law firm business development and the individuals who work in this field--providing an overview of the structure, responsibilities, and reporting structures of these departments in law firms. The intention of this survey is: "to demystify the roles, responsibilities, salaries and important statistics of the emerging sales and service professionals in law firms . . . and the new roles and responsibilities of law firm marketing executives."

Methodology of the LSSO Study

In order to encapsulate a complete picture of the subject at hand, the survey integrated qualitative and quantitative methodologies. This enabled the authors to capture important context about complicated situations, while also gathering accurate measurements that can be analyzed statistically to provide a benchmark for future surveys. The survey consisted of 24 questions, delivered electronically via links, emails and a newsletter. Participants were guaranteed anonymity, and no individuals or firms are identified in the results.



Role of the Sales Professional in Law Firms

The landscape of law firm and legal marketing has changed dramatically, and continues to change dramatically. Sales is a relatively new role in the legal professions, with many law firms beginning to staff up in this area over the past decade. Despite being new, this role has a significant impact on law firm financial health, as the LSSO survey reports “80% of legal sales professionals are having an impact on revenue through sales.”

Many of the survey respondents indicated having responsibilities that were a mix of strategic initiatives and administrative responsibilities, creating a wide-ranging workload. Additionally, these professionals must be able to work well both in and outside the firm, finding allies within the firm to hold the banner for initiatives and representing the firm externally, as the survey indicated 86% of the respondents had direct contact with clients and prospects.

One of the most promising finds in the survey was that 44% of respondents indicate that they report to the managing partner of the firm, a result the survey authors extrapolate as “a very positive result that can only raise their stature.”

Challenges Facing Sales Professionals in Law Firms

While the LSSO survey indicated lots of good news for legal marketers, there are obviously many challenges facing those who work in sales in law firms. These challenges stem from “overburdened and wide-ranging workloads.” As alluded to above, legal sales professionals have a mix of strategic and administrative roles, indicating a need for “a more developed organizational structure.” Additionally, law firm sales professionals also have a high burden on their internal resources, with very few outsourced functions beyond Media Relations and Lawyer coaching. Initiatives and innovation within law firm marketing departments are pushed forward by members of the department with limited external resources. Other challenges named by respondents were: “attorneys, training, time, lack of resources, role definition, change management, accountability, strategic thinking,

industry knowledge, and other factors.”



Expanding on the idea of a need for organizational structure, in spite of 44% of respondents reporting to the managing partner of the firm, only 14% report a Marketing/Sales/Business Development seat on the firm's management committee. This indicates a need and room for growth in law firms, and the survey results exist across firm size, geography, and focus.

In terms of compensation, most of the business development professionals report a strong base compensation, however, the bonus structure suggests a mismatch between individual performance and rewarding that performance.

[Beth M. Cuzzone, Chief Business Growth Officer at Goulston & Storrs](#) and LSSO Co-founder, says: "When we started the Legal Sales and Service Organization 16 years ago, law firms were just beginning to hire business development and client service professionals. This is no longer a novel idea and has become a core role within law firms. This survey is another tool to help our members and their law firms succeed."

The report is available on the [LSSO website](#).

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National Law Review, Volumess VIII, Number 309

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