

MAKING THEIR MARK: HOW MILLENNIAL LAWYERS COULD RESHAPE THE INDUSTRY

**FINDINGS FROM THE 2021 MAJOR, LINDSEY & AFRICA
AND ABOVE THE LAW MILLENNIAL SURVEY**



As the oldest millennials turn 40 this year and increasingly move into the partnership ranks, this generation's influence is being felt in the legal industry more than ever before. Many of these lawyers graduated amid the Great Recession, and they formed the industry's largest cohort during the COVID-era remotening of 2020. Now, they are poised to play a key role in reshaping the operations of the industry as it emerges from the pandemic lockdown.

To help law firms better understand these evolving workplace dynamics, we have partnered with our friends at Major, Lindsey & Africa for the third time to dig deep into the cultural changes that this generation has brought to law firms. Between March and April 2021, we surveyed the Above the Law audience to find out about the priorities and goals of millennial lawyers as well as generational differences that may exist between this group and its older counterparts.

Notably, we learned this year that millennials are becoming increasingly open to leaving their current

firm. Our 2019 survey found that the largest group of respondents had the goal of making partner where they work, but this time, the largest cohort expected to leave in just a few years. Their top reason? Dissatisfaction with work-life balance — perhaps an unsurprising result following a year characterized by a spike in workloads combined with pandemic-era stress.

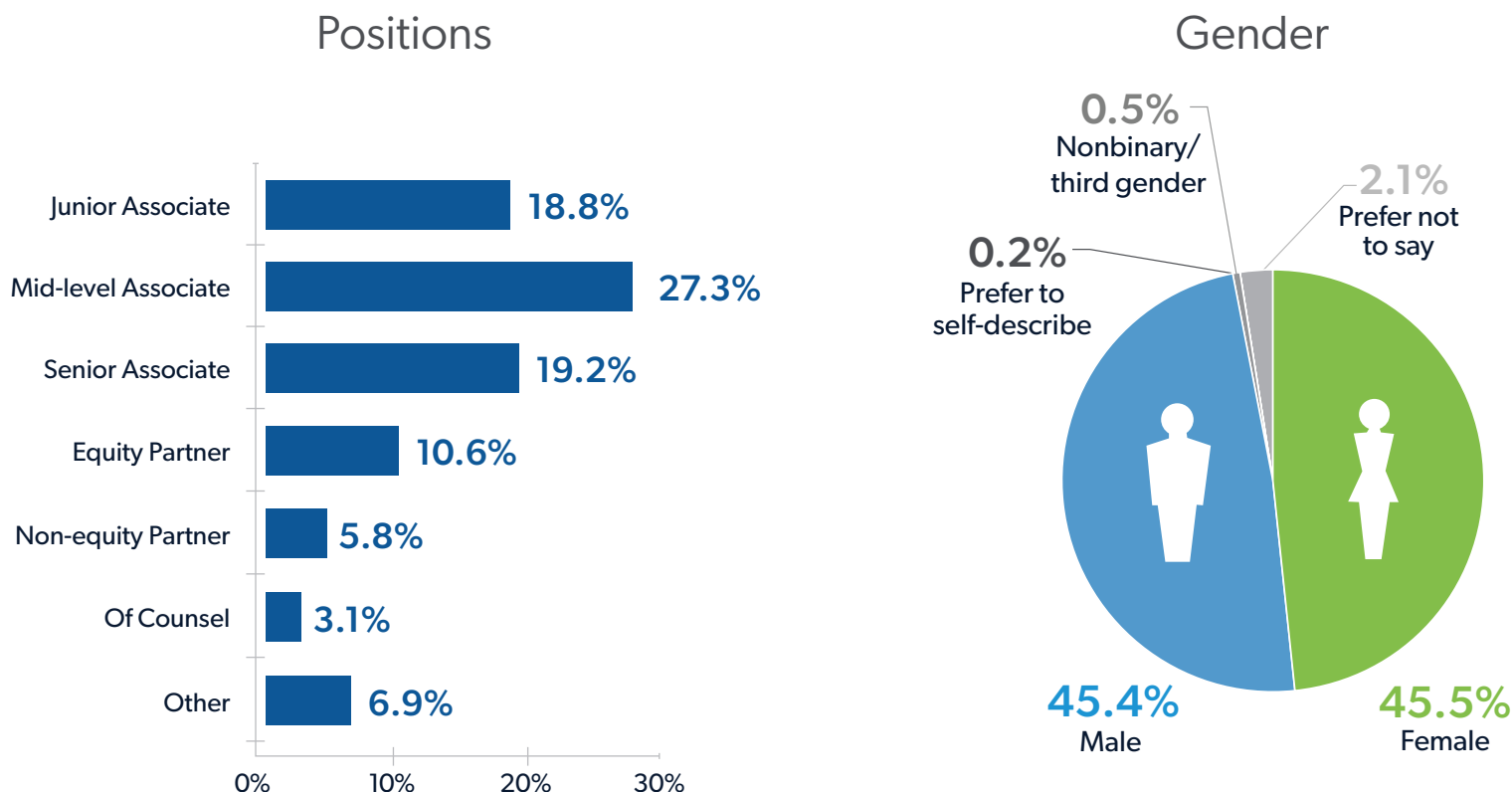
This generation also is increasingly taking on the long-standing problems of racial, gender, and other forms of bias in the legal industry. For instance, less than a third of respondents strongly agreed that their firms treat minority and non-minority attorneys equally when it comes to staffing matters.

In today's environment of salary wars and ever-growing lawyer demand, law firms must intensify their focus on attracting and retaining millennial talent. Those hoping to stay at the top of the market would be well-advised to consider the factors revealed in this report.



DEMOGRAPHICS

Total Respondents: 1,471



Gender Breakdown by Position

Associates

49.0%
Male

48.1%
Female

0.5%
Nonbinary/
third gender

0.2%
Prefer to
self-describe

2.1%
Prefer not
to say

Partner/Counsel

55.6%
Male

41.5%
Female

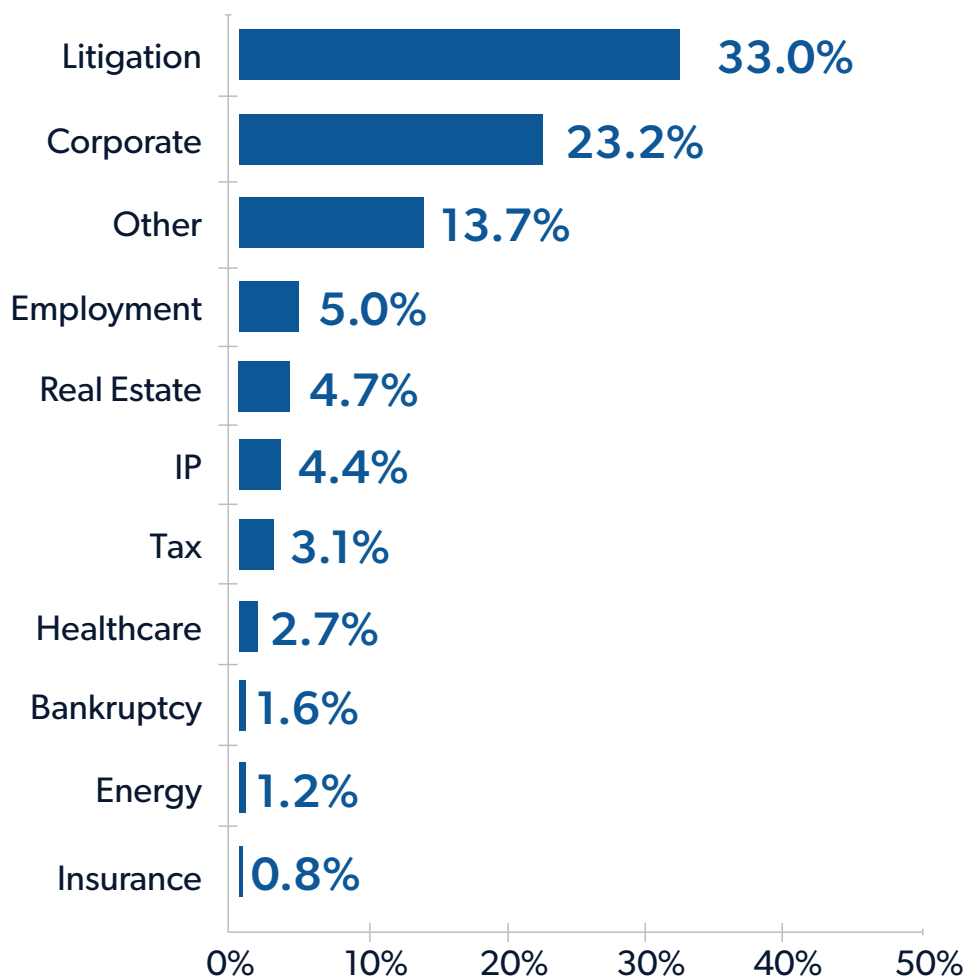
0.7%
Nonbinary/
third gender

0%
Prefer to
self-describe

2.2%
Prefer not
to say

DEMOGRAPHICS

Practice Area



"Other" responses

included (but not limited to):

- Trusts & Estates
- Environmental
- Banking/Finance/Securities
- Family Law
- International Trade
- Policy/Regulatory
- Workers' Comp./Employee Benefits
- Immigration
- Education
- Government
- Privacy
- Administrative
- ADA
- Antitrust
- Technology

Location (Top 6 Overall)

23.2%
New York

14.1%
California

7.1%
Illinois

4.8%
Massachusetts

6.5%
Texas

4.1%
Outside
of U.S.



KEY FINDINGS

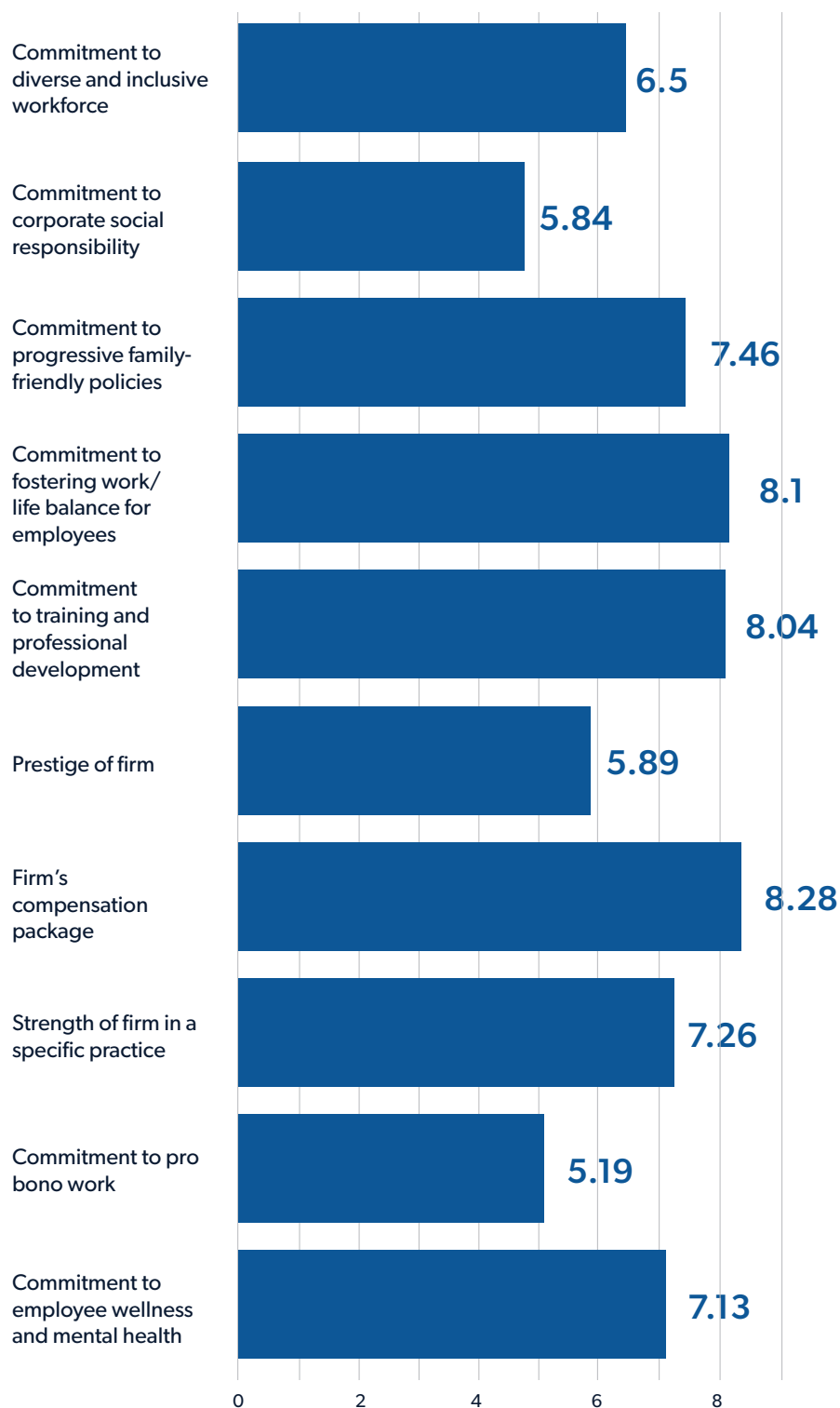
- > 50% of respondents report they want to make partner (either at their current firm or another firm).
- > Respondents in this year's survey value the firm's compensation package over all other factors when evaluating potential employers. This was a change from our most recent survey, completed in 2019, in which respondents primarily valued work/life balance.
- > The largest cohort of respondents (30.86%) reported that, ideally, they would like to work at their firm **between 3 and 5 years**. This is a shift from our earlier survey, where the largest cohort (31%) indicated they would like to make partner.
- > The largest cohort of respondents (25.64%) rated their level of formal mentorship as **moderate**. This signals an uptick from our 2019 findings, where the largest cohort of respondents rate their level of formal mentorship as weak.
- > A plurality of respondents (58.19%) reported that they either somewhat or strongly agree that their firm treats minority attorneys and non-minority attorneys equally when it comes to staffing matters.
- > Consistent with our 2019 survey, loyalty and partnership aspirations were found to be correlated.
- > Informal mentorship continues to play a larger role in the careers of respondents than formal mentorship.
- > About 60% of respondents reported that their access to meaningful work is either **strong or very strong**.
- > A plurality of respondents (48.15%) reported that they either **somewhat or absolutely disagree** that associate development is not hampered in a work from home model.
- > Since our 2019 survey, the number of respondents who said they would like to be running their own firm or practice dropped substantially (from 12.34% in 2019 to 4.47% this year).
- > Dissatisfaction with **work/life balance** was the most important reason for openness to a new job opportunity (47.46%). This was a shift from the last survey, in which dissatisfaction with compensation was the top reason.
- > Associates agree more than partners that the Millennial generation is changing law firm policies and culture for the better, which makes sense. Notably though, women "somewhat agree" more than men, but men "strongly agree" more than women.
- > Respondents who identified as **male** indicated that the firm's compensation package was the most important factor when evaluating a potential employer, consistent with overall results. Respondents who identified as **female** indicated that the firm's commitment to fostering work/life balance for employees was the most important factor when evaluating a potential employer.
- > The majority of respondents (57.32%) reported that they **strongly agree** that it is important for their firm to have a flexible work from home policy.
- > Significant majorities of associates agree that their colleagues work collaboratively and genuinely enjoy one another's company, suggesting a working environment that is more positive than conventional wisdom about large law firms suggests.

PRIORITIES

Longitudinal Priorities Comparisons

How important are the following to you in evaluating a potential employer?

Respondents assigned a value from 0 (not important) to 10 (very important) to each factor.



PRIORITIES

2021 Ranked by Mean *(italicized text include new options for this year)*

	Firm's compensation package	Commitment to fostering work/life balance for employees	Commitment to training and professional development	Commitment to progressive family-friendly policies	Commitment to employee wellness and mental health	Strength of firm in a specific practice area	Commitment to diverse and inclusive workforce	Prestige of firm	Commitment to corporate social responsibility	Commitment to pro bono work
Mean	8.28	8.10	8.04	7.46	7.31	7.26	6.50	5.89	5.84	5.19
Variance	3.92	5.40	4.64	6.74	6.79	5.49	9.34	6.00	8.45	8.03

Respondents in this year's survey value the firm's compensation package over all other factors when evaluating potential employers. This was a change from our most recent survey, completed in 2019, in which respondents primarily valued work/life balance.

Compared to our 2019 survey, there was a slight uptick in mean regarding how important respondents found potential employers' commitment to training and professional development (8.01 to 8.04) and commitment to a diverse and inclusive workforce (6.17 to 6.50).

Compared with our previous findings, variances have **widened** for the following considerations:

- Commitment to a diverse and inclusive workplace (8.46 to 9.34)
- Commitment to fostering work/life balance for employees (4.03 to 5.40)
- Strength of firm in a specific practice area (6.64 to 5.49)
- Commitment to corporate social responsibility (7.36 to 8.45)

This suggests that for the people for whom these are a priority, the factors are even more important this year; for those for whom they are not, the factors remain lower on the list.

2019 Rank by Mean

	Commitment to fostering work/life balance for employees	Firm's compensation package	Commitment to training and professional development	Commitment to progressive family-friendly policies	Strength of firm in a specific practice area	Commitment to diverse and inclusive workforce	Prestige of firm	Commitment to corporate social responsibility
Mean	8.20	8.05	8.01	7.45	6.72	6.17	5.87	5.80
Variance	4.03	3.82	4.00	5.93	6.64	8.46	6.48	7.36

PRIORITIES

2021 Ranked by Variance

(Variance measures how far a set of numbers are spread out from their average value) (*italicized text include new options for this year*)

	Commitment to diverse and inclusive workforce	Commitment to corporate social responsibility	<i>Commitment to pro bono work</i>	<i>Commitment to employee wellness and mental health</i>	Commitment to progressive family-friendly policies	Prestige of firm	Strength of firm in a specific practice area	Commitment to fostering work/life balance for employees	Commitment to training and professional development	Firm's compensation package
Mean	6.50	5.84	5.19	7.31	7.46	5.89	7.26	8.10	8.04	8.28
Variance	9.34	8.45	8.03	6.79	6.74	6.00	5.49	5.40	4.64	3.92

2019 Ranked by Variance

	Commitment to diverse and inclusive workforce	Commitment to corporate social responsibility	Strength of firm in a specific practice area	Prestige of firm	Commitment to progressive family-friendly policies	Commitment to fostering work/life balance for employees	Commitment to training and professional development	Firm's compensation package
Mean	6.17	5.80	6.72	5.87	7.45	8.20	8.01	8.05
Variance	8.46	7.36	6.64	6.48	5.93	4.03	4.00	3.82

2021 Mean by Gender

	Firm's compensation package	Commitment to fostering work/life balance for employees	Commitment to training and professional development	Commitment to progressive family-friendly policies	<i>Commitment to employee wellness and mental health</i>	Strength of firm in a specific practice area	Commitment to diverse and inclusive workforce	Prestige of firm
Male	8.53	7.79	7.73	6.89	6.77	7.56	5.55	6.36
Female	8.09	8.36	8.34	8.06	7.72	7.01	7.26	5.44

Respondents who identified as **male** indicated that the firm's compensation package was the most important factor when evaluating a potential employer, consistent with overall results. This was a shift from the 2019 results, in which they valued commitment to training and professional development the most.

Respondents who identified as **female** indicated that the firm's commitment to fostering work/life balance for employees was the most important factor when evaluating a potential employer. This is consistent with the results from 2019.

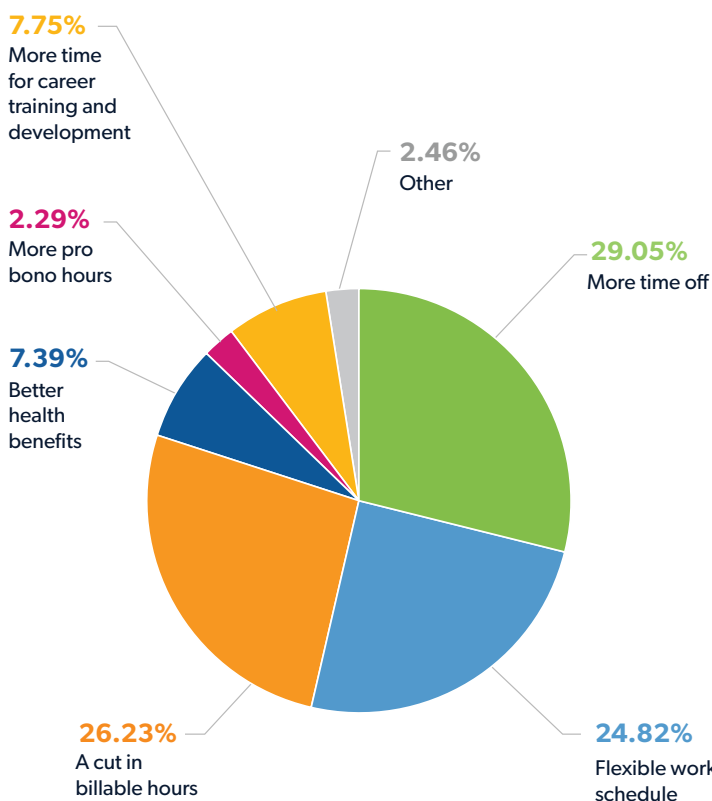
2019 Mean by Gender

	Firm's compensation package	Commitment to fostering work/life balance for employees	Commitment to training and professional development	Commitment to progressive family-friendly policies	Prestige of firm	Strength of firm in a specific practice area	Commitment to diverse and inclusive workforce	Commitment to corporate social responsibility
Male	8.23	7.98	7.92	7.07	5.95	6.72	5.18	5.25
Female	7.8	8.55	8.12	7.99	5.71	6.82	7.3	6.4

PRIORITIES

Which of the following, if any, would you trade a portion of your compensation for?

(Multiple selections allowed)



More time off was the primary factor that respondents indicated that they would trade a portion of their compensation for (29.05%). This was followed by a **flexible work schedule** (24.82%).

Respondents were least likely to trade compensation for more pro bono hours (2.29%), consistent with results from the previous survey.

Both men (29.05%) and women (29.03%) indicated that they would trade a portion of their compensation for more time off at nearly identical rates.

"Other" responses included:

- Permanent work from home arrangements
- Long-term sustainability and prospects for firm success, including profitability and prestige
- Would not trade a portion of compensation
- Client development
- Flexibility to hire an associate or paralegal to work under me
- Working remotely from abroad
- Certainty of hours/more predictable hours
- Support for taking time off
- Pay equity among similarly-situated employees

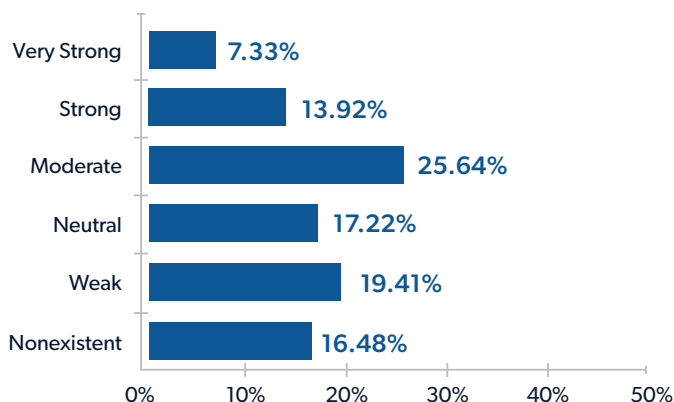
How important is it that your firm's clients' values align with your own?

5.37 Mean
Average Score

Compared with our earlier survey, there was a slight **increase**, from 5.2 to 5.37, in the importance of a firm's clients' values aligning with those of respondents.

Women found it more important that their firm's clients' values aligned with their own (5.78 as opposed to 4.8 reported by males). This was consistent with findings from our previous survey.

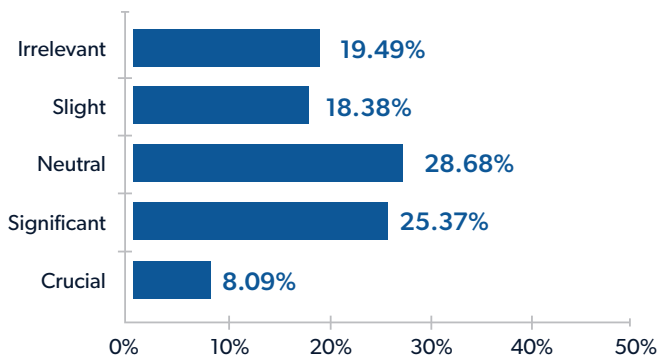
How would you rate the level of formal (i.e., assigned by the firm) mentorship that you receive?



The largest cohort of respondents (25.64%) rated their level of formal mentorship as **moderate**. This signals an uptick from our 2019 findings, where the largest cohort of respondents rate their level of formal mentorship as weak.

PRIORITIES

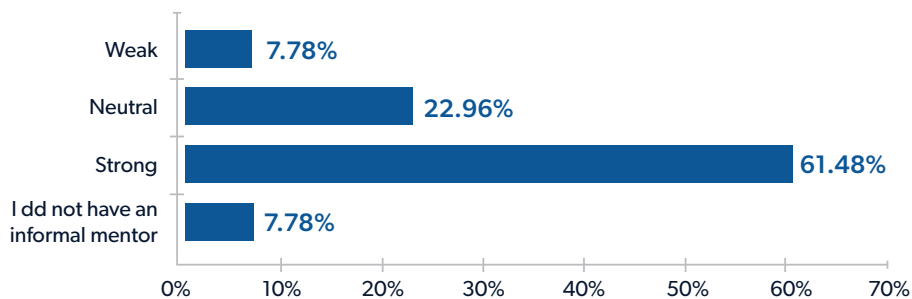
How important a role does or has a formal mentor played in your career?



The largest cohort of respondents (28.68%) were **neutral** in regards to the role a formal mentor has played in their career. The next largest cohort (**25.37%**) reported that a formal mentor has played a **significant** role in their career. In our earlier survey, an almost equal percentage (28.34%) reported that a formal mentor was irrelevant.

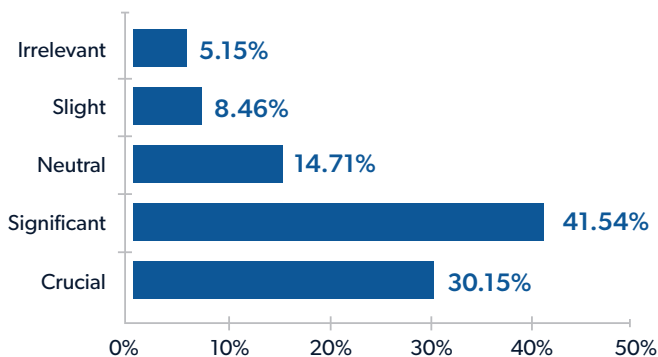
The largest cohort of male respondents (27.12%) reported that a formal mentor has played a **significant** role in their career, whereas the largest cohort of female respondents (32.65%) reported being **neutral**.

How would you rate the level of informal (i.e., personally developed) mentorship that you receive?



The majority of respondents (61.48%) reported that the level of informal mentorship they receive is **strong**. This is consistent with the results from our earlier surveys.

How important a role does or has an informal mentor played in your career?

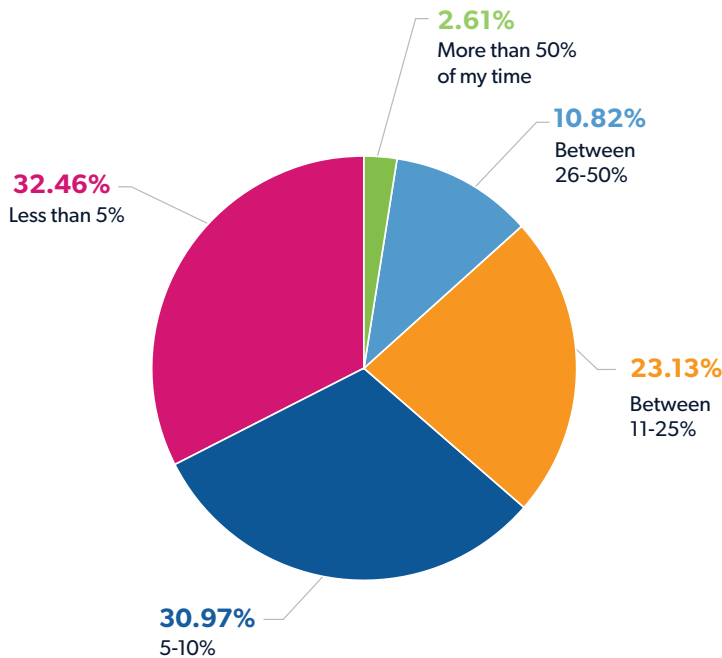


Almost 72% of respondents reported that an informal mentor has played either a **significant or crucial** role in their career.

Informal mentorship continues to play a larger role in the careers of respondents than formal mentorship.

PRIORITIES

Approximately how much time do you spend on business development?



The largest cohort of respondents (32.46%) reported that they spend **less than 5%** of their time on business development.

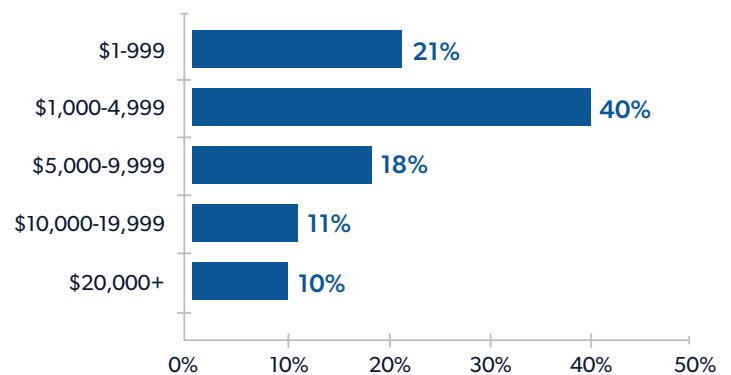
- Compared with our 2019 survey, there was a notable decrease in the percentage of respondents who stated that they spend less than 5% of their time on business development (44.81% to 32.46%).
- The percentage of respondents who marked that they spend more than 50% of their time on business development increased from 1.42% to 2.61%, so progress!

Do you have a business development budget?



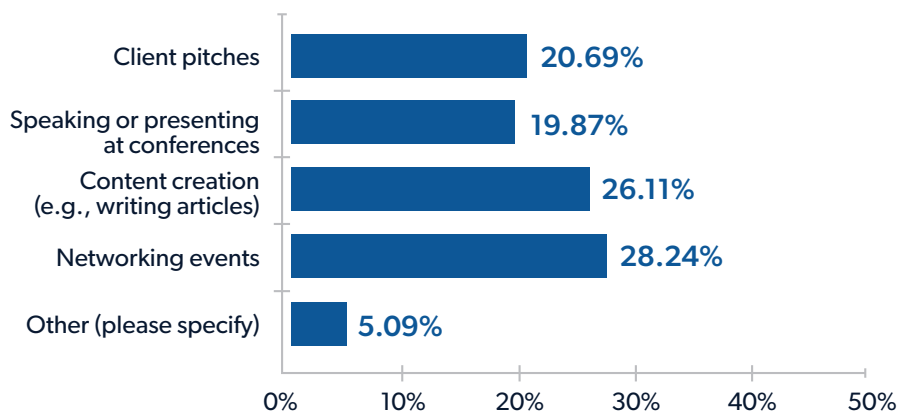
The majority of respondents reported that they **did not** have a business development budget. This was a small decrease from our previous survey (66% to 62%).

Which best describes your business development budget?



PRIORITIES

Which of the following does your business development activity entail? (Multiple selections allowed)



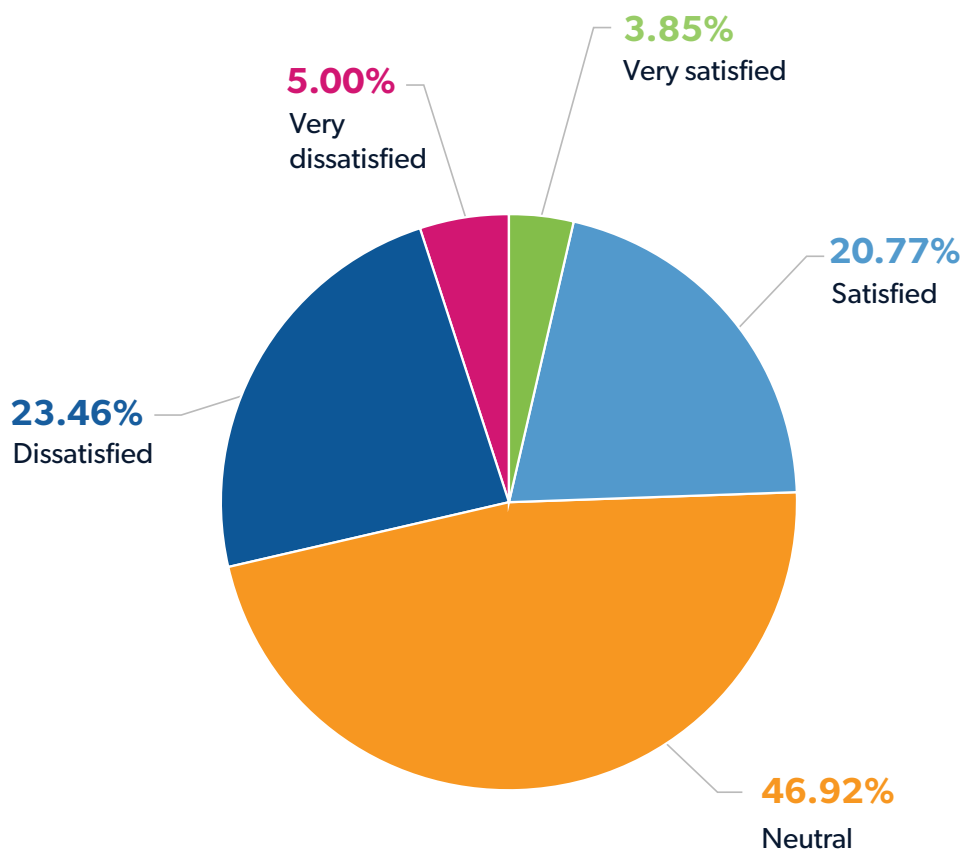
Consistent with findings from our 2019 survey, the largest cohort of respondents (28.24%) reported that their business development activity consisted of **networking events**. This was followed by **content creation**.

"Other" responses included:

- Market research, preparing for client events
- Work on court and community legal initiatives
- Acceptance of client referrals with quick follow up and good work
- Civic commitment/involvement, partnering with clients and client prospects on various initiatives
- Meals
- Networking on social media, responding to posts by lawyers, print advertising, speaking to referral sources such as agents and title companies
- Recruiting events
- Community involvement
- One-on-one outings
- Event sponsorships
- Informal networking
- Internal promotion materials

PRIORITIES

How satisfied are you with the amount of time you spend on business development?



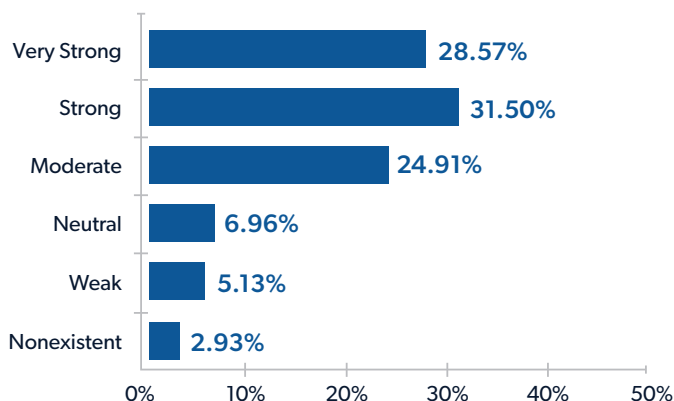
Almost half of respondents (46.92%) reported that they were **neutral** about the amount of time they spend on business development. This was followed by those who reported they were **dissatisfied** (23.46%).

Respondents who described themselves as “neutral” about the amount of time spent on business development increased by over 10% from our previous survey (36.15% to 46.92%).

The percentage of those who described themselves as being “very satisfied” roughly halved, from 6.63% in 2019 to 3.85%, in 2021.

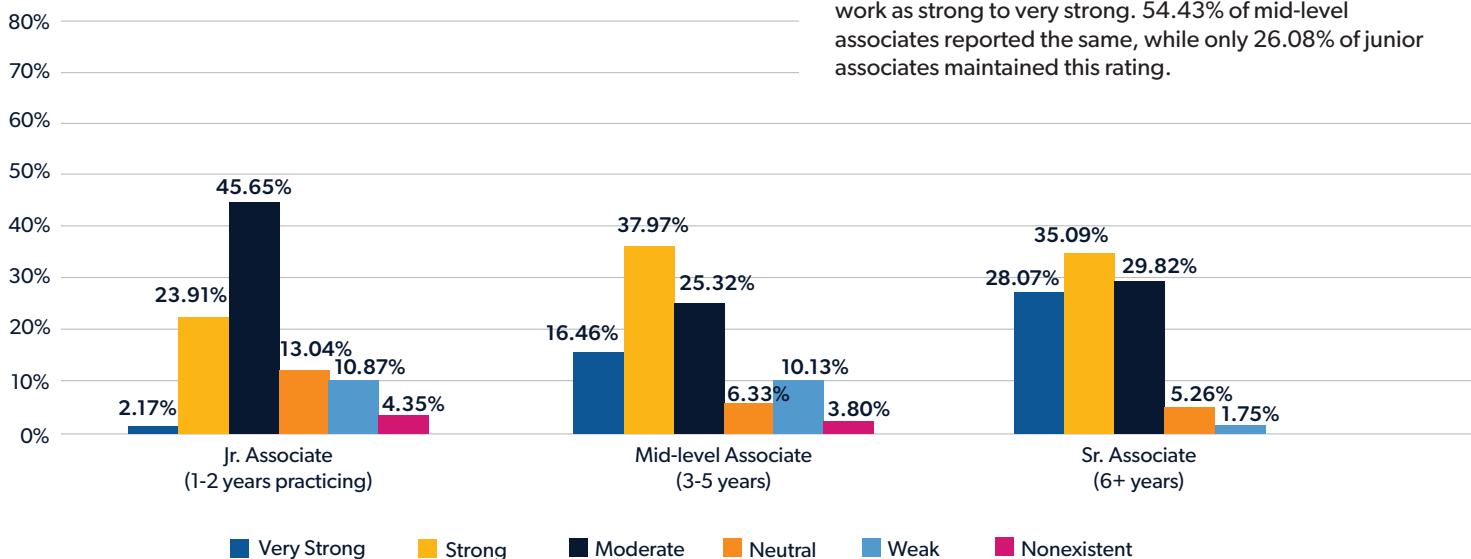
NEW QUESTIONS ABOUT PRIORITIES

How would you rate your access to meaningful work, such as litigation speaking roles or leadership in dealmaking?

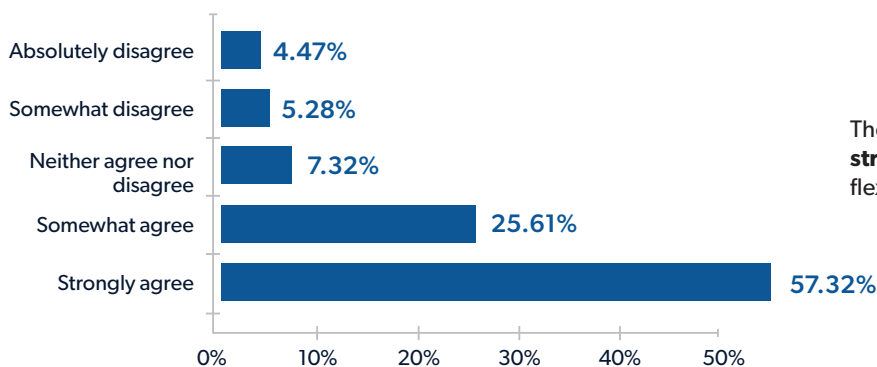


About 60% of respondents reported that their access to meaningful work is either **strong** or **very strong**.

By Role



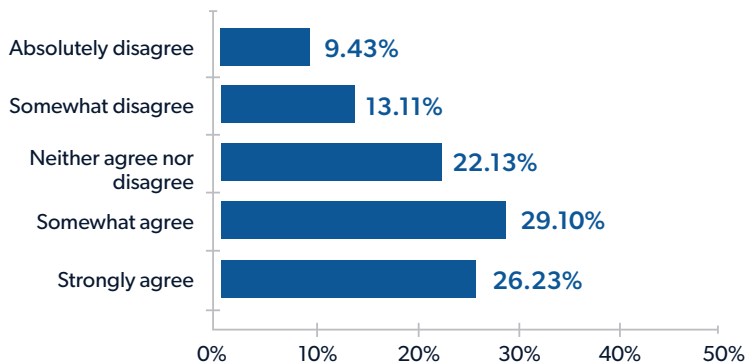
It is important for my firm to have a flexible work from home policy.



The majority of respondents (57.32%) reported that they **strongly agree** that it is important for their firm to have a flexible work from home policy.

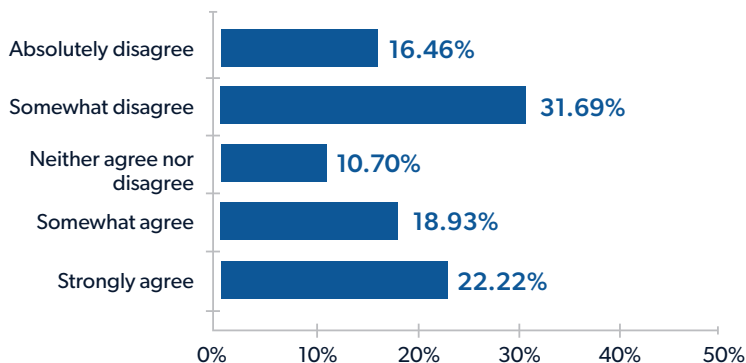
NEW QUESTIONS ABOUT PRIORITIES

I am happy with my firm's work from home policy.



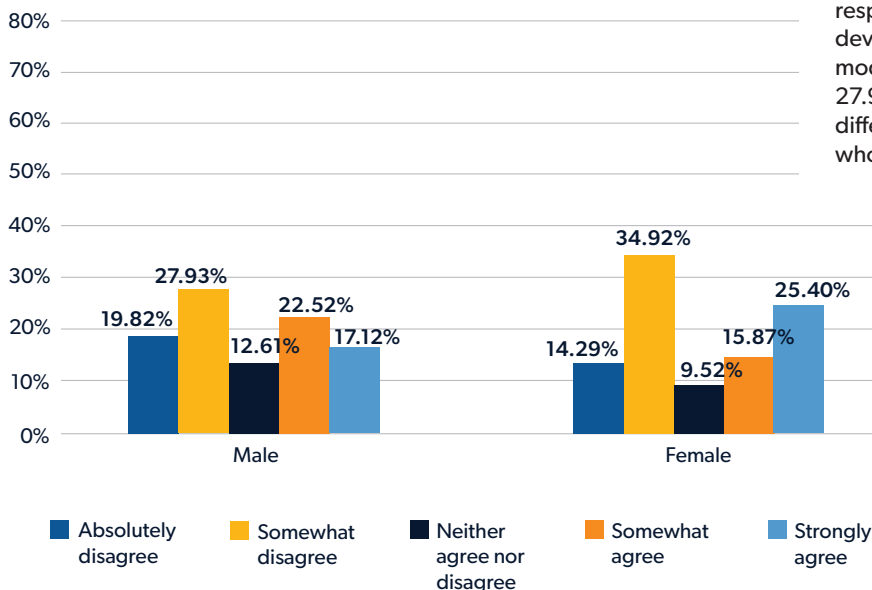
29.10% of respondents reported that they **somewhat agree** that they are happy with their firm's work from home policy.

Associate development is not hampered in a work from home model.



A plurality of respondents (48.15%) reported that they either **somewhat or absolutely disagree** that associate development is not hampered in a work from home model.

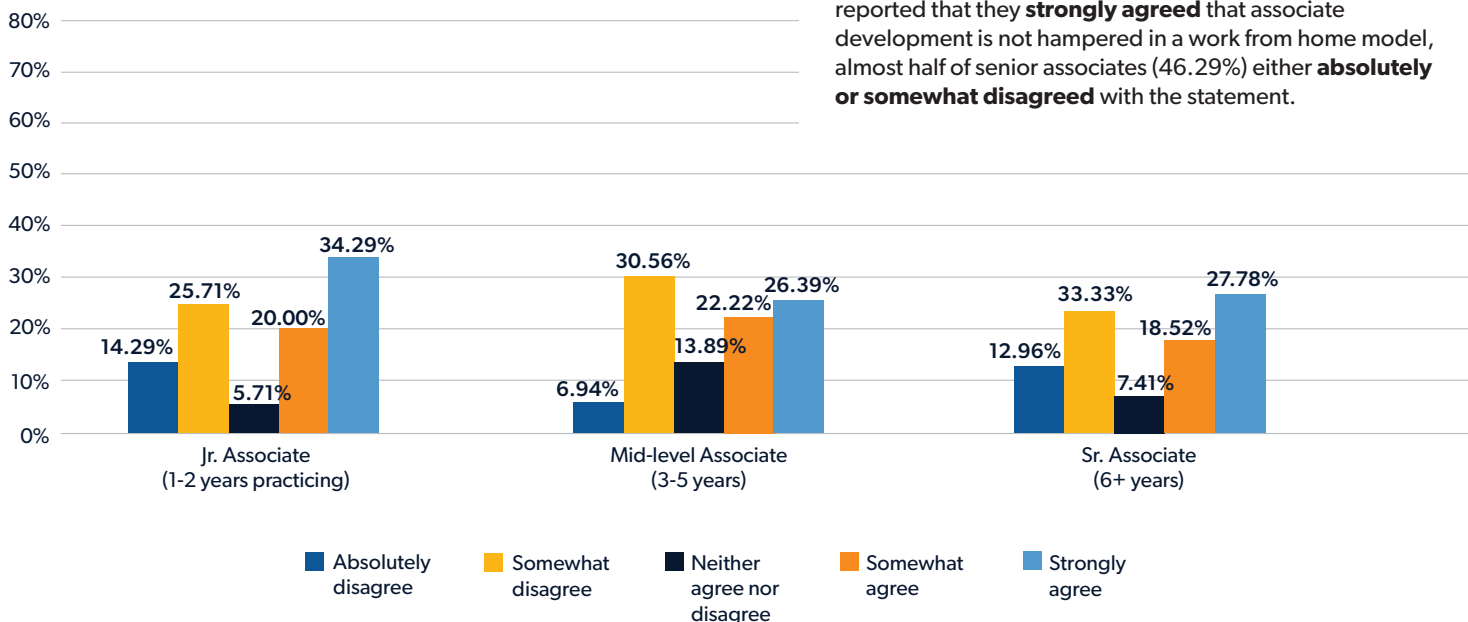
By Gender



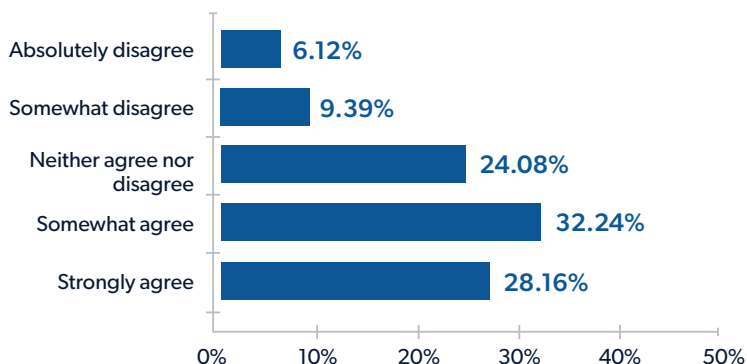
While the largest cohorts of both male and female respondents **somewhat disagreed** that associate development is not hampered in a work from home model, a larger portion of female respondents (34.92% vs. 27.93%) reported this. Additionally, there was a nearly 10% difference between men (17.12%) and women (25.40%) who **strongly agreed** with this statement.

NEW QUESTIONS ABOUT PRIORITIES

By Role

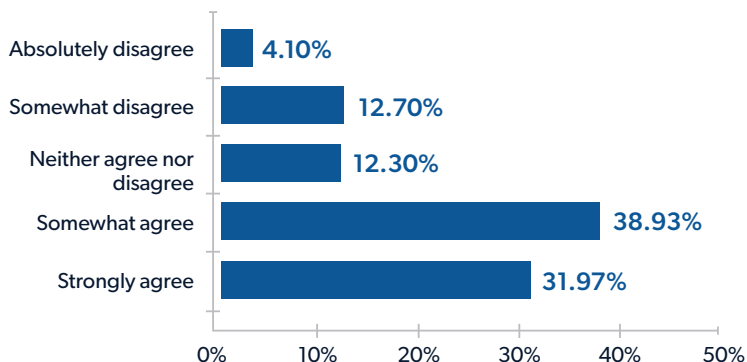


My firm has a distinct culture/personality despite the work from home model.



The largest cohort of respondents (32.24%) reported that they **somewhat agree** that their firm has a distinct culture/personality despite the work from home model.

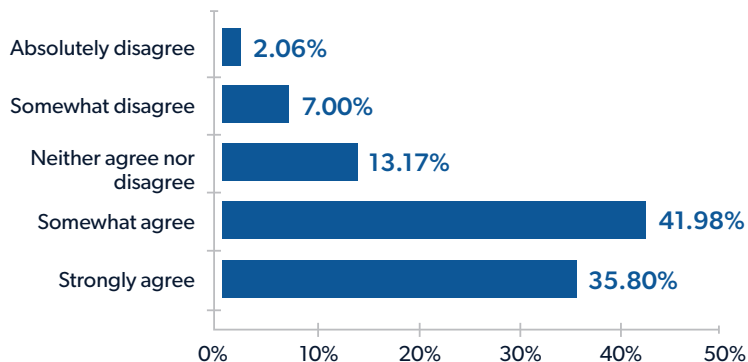
Partners at my firm work collaboratively with each other.



Slightly over 70% of respondents **agreed** that the partners at their firm work collaboratively with each other.

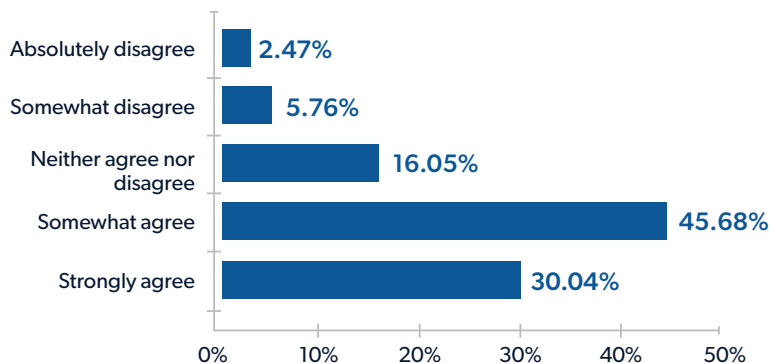
NEW QUESTIONS ABOUT PRIORITIES

Associates at my firm work collaboratively with each other.



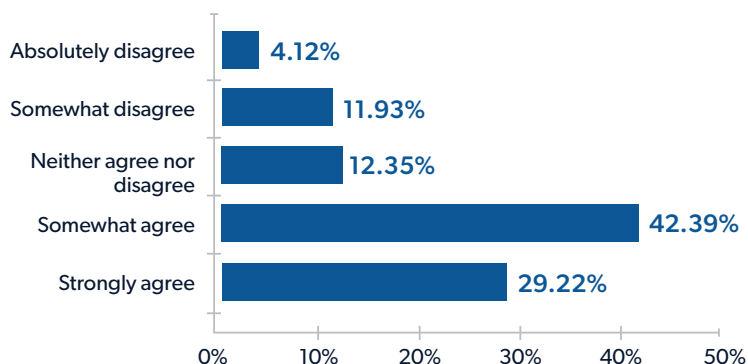
Almost 80% of respondents **agreed** that the associates at their firm work collaboratively with each other.

The attorneys at my firm genuinely like spending time with each other.



75.72% of respondents **agreed** that attorneys at their firm genuinely like spending time with each other.

The partners in my firm are appreciative and value when I work hard.

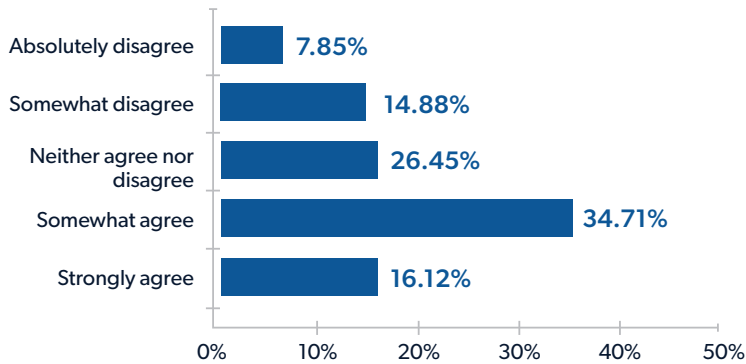


71.61% of respondents **agreed** that the partners at their firm are appreciative and value when they work hard.

To summarize, significant majorities of associates agree that their colleagues—partners and associates alike—work collaboratively and genuinely enjoy one another's company. Plus, their bosses are appreciative of and value their work! This suggests a working environment that is more positive than conventional wisdom about large law firms suggests.

NEW QUESTIONS ABOUT PRIORITIES

My firm's assignment system is fair.



Half of respondents (50.83%) **agreed** that their firm's assignment system is fair, and roughly half did not.

Respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement with the following series of statements.

	Absolutely disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
My firm has an authentic commitment to racial diversity in hiring.	8.38%	12.29%	22.35%	34.64%	22.35%
My firm treats minority attorneys and non-minority attorneys equally when it comes to staffing matters.	5.08%	14.69%	22.03%	26.55%	31.64%
My firm is dedicated to the training and development of minority attorneys.	10.80%	8.52%	25.57%	28.41%	26.70%
Minority attorneys have equal access to quality matters through our assignment system.	5.65%	7.91%	28.25%	25.42%	32.77%
My firm has an authentic commitment to gender diversity in hiring.	5.65%	8.47%	16.38%	31.07%	38.42%
My firm treats female and male attorneys equally when it comes to staffing matters.	7.34%	11.86%	14.12%	25.42%	41.24%
My firm is dedicated to the training and development of female attorneys.	6.25%	8.52%	20.45%	22.73%	42.05%
Female attorneys have equal access to quality matters through our assignment system.	5.65%	7.91%	15.82%	26.55%	44.07%
My firm has an authentic commitment to LGBTQIA+ diversity in hiring.	6.86%	8.57%	34.86%	25.71%	24.00%
My firm treats LGBTQIA+ and non-LGBTQIA+ attorneys equally when it comes to staffing matters.	6.32%	5.17%	30.46%	21.26%	36.78%
My firm is dedicated to the training and development of LGBTQIA+ attorneys.	6.90%	6.32%	38.51%	20.69%	27.59%
LGBTQIA+ attorneys have equal access to quality matters through our assignment system.	5.75%	5.17%	33.91%	20.11%	35.06%
My firm has an authentic commitment to disability diversity in hiring.	12.00%	12.57%	48.00%	13.71%	13.71%
My firm treats disabled attorneys and non-disabled attorneys equally when it comes to staffing matters.	8.05%	6.32%	50.57%	12.64%	22.41%
My firm is dedicated to the training and development of disabled attorneys.	11.49%	6.32%	51.72%	13.22%	17.24%
Disabled attorneys have equal access to quality matters through our assignment system.	9.20%	5.17%	49.43%	14.37%	21.84%

DEMOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWNS

My firm treats minority attorneys and non-minority attorneys equally when it comes to staffing matters.

	Absolutely disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
ASSOCIATES	5.26%	18.42%	22.81%	29.82%	23.68%
PARTNERS	3.70%	9.26%	20.37%	20.37%	46.30%
MALES	2.50%	8.75%	21.25%	28.75%	38.75%
FEMALES	6.45%	19.35%	23.66%	24.73%	25.81%

While 46.30% of partners strongly agreed that their firm treats minority and non-minority attorneys equally when it comes to staffing matters, only 23.68% of associates strongly agreed. 38.75% of males strongly agreed with this statement, whereas only 25.81% of women strongly agreed.

Minority attorneys have equal access to quality matters through our assignment system.

	Absolutely disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
ASSOCIATES	7.02%	11.40%	29.82%	27.19%	24.56%
PARTNERS	3.70%	1.85%	24.07%	24.07%	46.30%
MALES	2.50%	5.00%	26.25%	25.00%	41.25%
FEMALES	6.45%	10.75%	31.18%	25.81%	25.81%

24.56% of associates strongly agreed that minority attorneys have equal access to quality matters through their firm's assignment system. This number was notably higher for partners, at 46.30%. Additionally, while 41.25% of males strongly agreed with this statement, only 25.81% of women felt the same.

My firm has an authentic commitment to gender diversity in hiring.

	Absolutely disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
ASSOCIATES	4.39%	10.53%	16.67%	36.84%	31.58%
PARTNERS	7.41%	5.56%	16.67%	22.22%	48.15%
MALES	2.50%	6.25%	13.75%	27.50%	50.00%
FEMALES	7.53%	9.68%	17.20%	35.48%	30.11%

An almost equal percentage of associates (31.58%) and women (30.11%) strongly agreed that their firm has an authentic commitment to gender diversity in hiring. This percentage was notably higher for partners and men, at 48.15% and 50% respectively.

DEMOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWNS

My firm treats female and male attorneys equally when it comes to staffing matters.

	Absolutely disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
ASSOCIATES	8.77%	13.16%	15.79%	29.82%	32.46%
PARTNERS	3.70%	11.11%	12.96%	18.52%	53.70%
MALES	2.50%	10.00%	13.75%	20.00%	53.75%
FEMALES	10.75%	13.98%	13.98%	30.11%	31.18%

The disparity between males and females who felt their firm treats them equally when it comes to staffing matters was notable. 53.75% of males strongly agreed that their firm treats men and women equally in staffing matters, while only 31.18% of women strongly agreed.

My firm is dedicated to the training and development of female attorneys.

	Absolutely disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
ASSOCIATES	7.08%	7.96%	23.89%	26.55%	34.51%
PARTNERS	3.70%	11.11%	12.96%	18.52%	53.70%
MALES	2.50%	5.00%	15.00%	25.00%	52.50%
FEMALES	8.70%	11.96%	25.00%	19.57%	34.78%

While over half of partners (53.70%) strongly agreed that their firm is dedicated to the training and development of female attorneys, only 34.51% of associates felt this way. Similarly, 52.50% of males strongly agreed, while only 34.78% of women respondents felt the same.

Female attorneys have equal access to quality matters through our assignment system.

	Absolutely disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
ASSOCIATES	7.02%	8.77%	18.42%	29.82%	35.96%
PARTNERS	1.85%	7.41%	11.11%	24.07%	55.56%
MALES	2.50%	6.25%	13.75%	22.50%	55.00%
FEMALES	7.53%	9.68%	18.28%	30.11%	34.41%

While the largest cohorts of men and women both **strongly agreed** that female attorneys have equal access to quality matters through their firm's assignment system, there was a significant disparity in the percentages. Over half of male respondents strongly agreed (55%), while only 34.41% of women felt the same. Additionally, 55.56% of partners felt this way, while only 35.96% of associates strongly agreed.

GOALS

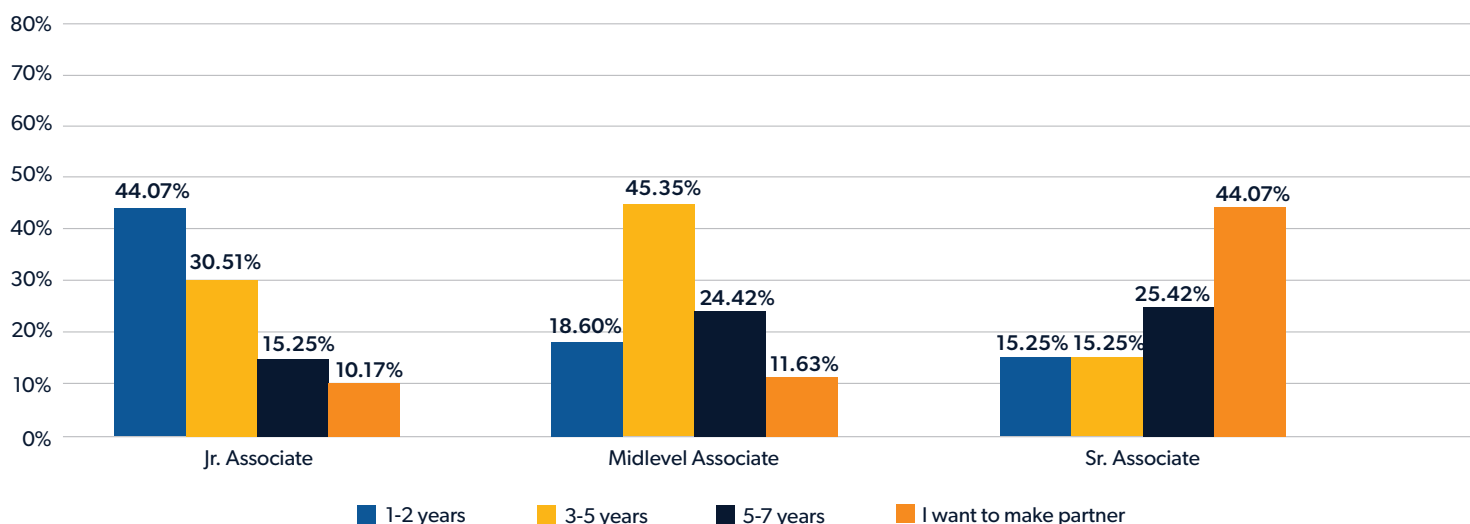
Longitudinal Priorities Comparisons

Ideally, how long would you like to work at your firm?

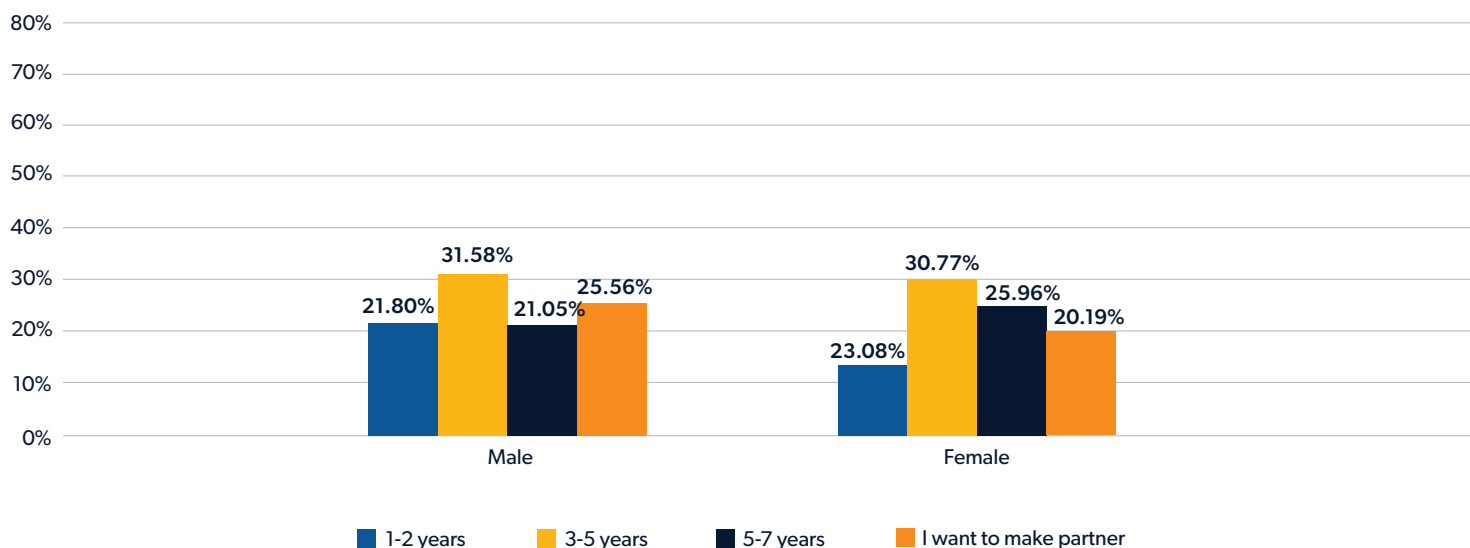


The largest cohort of respondents (30.86%) reported that ideally, they would like to work at their firm **between 3 and 5 years**. This is a shift from our earlier survey, where the largest cohort (31%) indicated they would like to make partner.

By Position

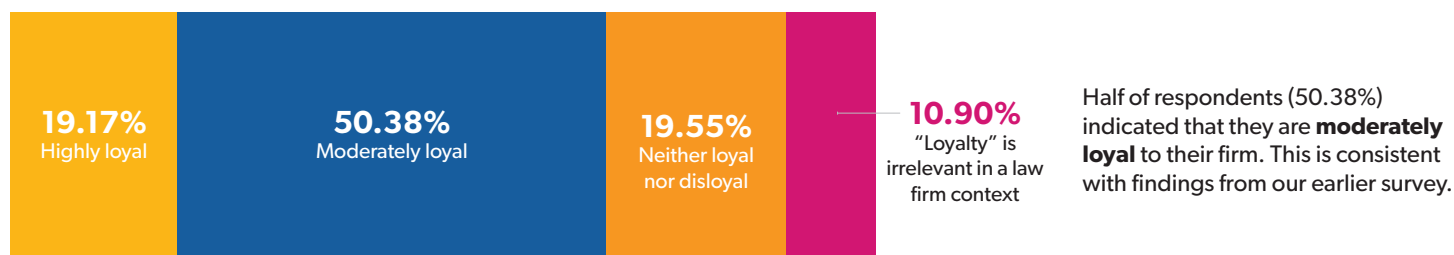


By Gender

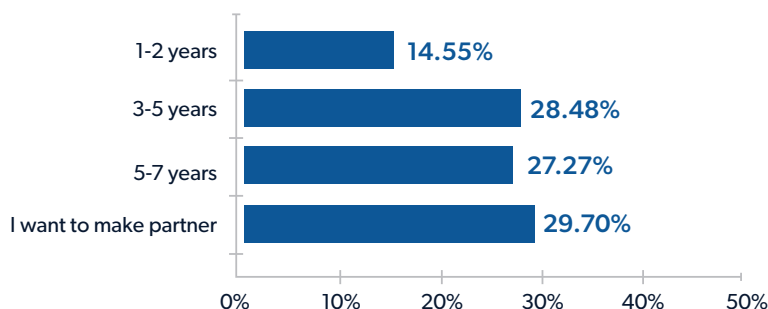


GOALS

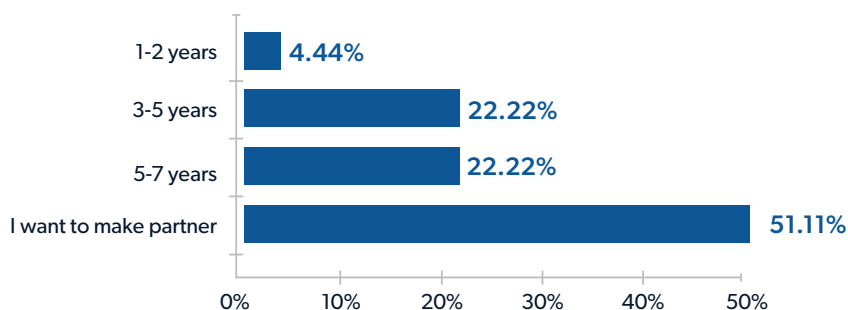
How “loyal” are you to your firm?



We isolated the responses from individuals who self-described as “highly” or “moderately” loyal and found that they were more likely to have aspirations to partnership, at a rate of almost 30%—about 7% higher than the overall population.

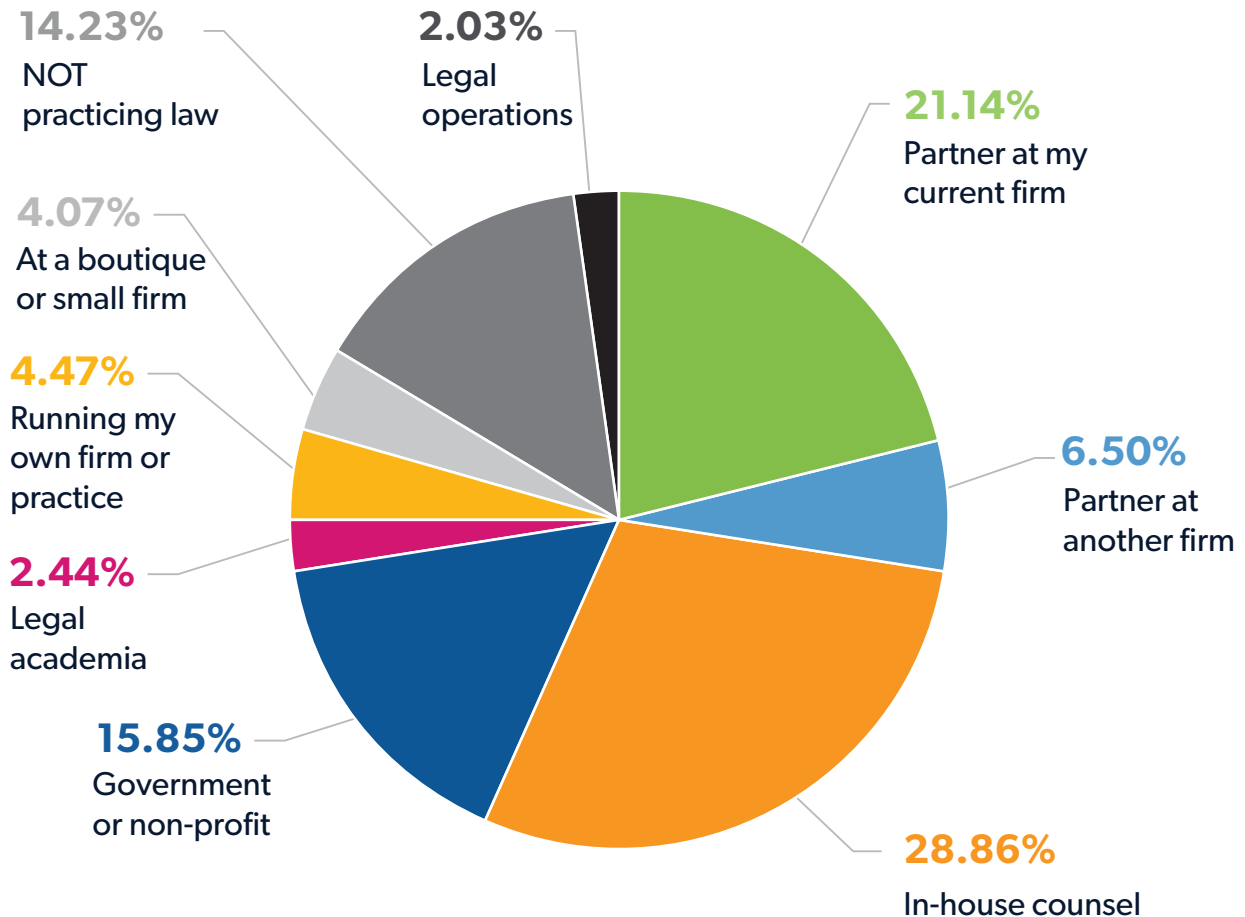


We also looked at individuals who described themselves as “highly” loyal and found that this cohort was even more likely to aspire to partnership, at a rate of over 50%.



GOALS

What do you see yourself doing in 10 years?



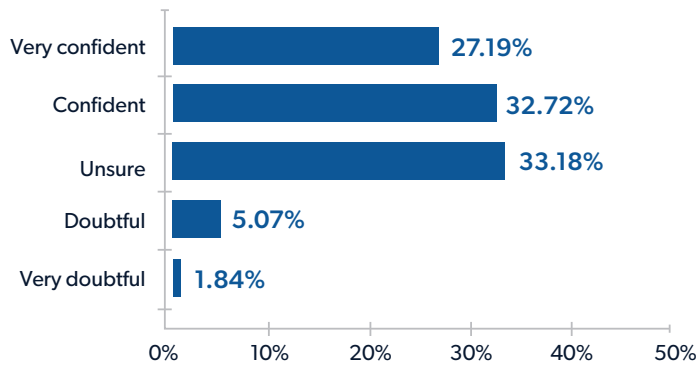
- 14.23% of respondents indicated that in 10 years they would like to have left legal practice. This was an almost 2% increase from our 2019 survey.
- Since our 2019 survey, the number of respondents who said they would like to be running their own firm or practice dropped substantially (from 12.34% in 2019 to 4.47% this year).
- The largest cohort of respondents, at 28.86%, indicated that they would like to be working as in-house counsel within the next 10 years.
- 28.79% of **male** respondents reported that in 10 years they would like to be in-house counsel; the next largest cohort (21.97%) reported that they would like to be a partner at their current firm.
- 30.19% of **female** respondents reported that they would like to be in-house counsel in 10 years; the next largest group (20.75%) reported that they would like to be working for a government or non-profit in 10 years—this finding was consistent with the last survey.

Future career goals outside legal practice included:

- Writer
- Consulting
- Investor/Entrepreneur
- Run a legal tech startup
- More public service
- Therapist
- Policy analyst for state government or working as a lobbyist
- Owning my own business
- Legal recruitment, career adviser at law school
- Finance/management
- Information technology
- Retirement

GOALS

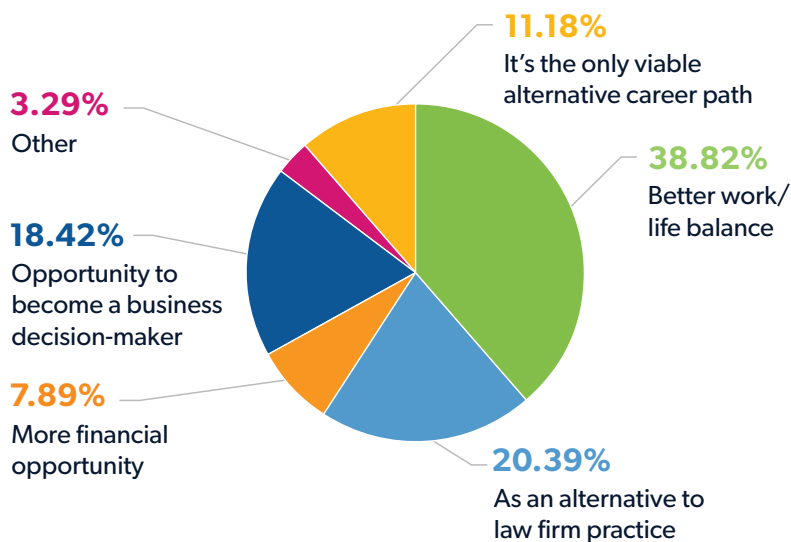
How confident are you that you will achieve your goal in 10 years?



Almost 60% of respondents indicated they were either **confident or very confident** that they would reach their goal within 10 years. This is an almost 10% drop from our earlier survey, where almost 70% of respondents reported the same.

Why are you interested in going in-house?

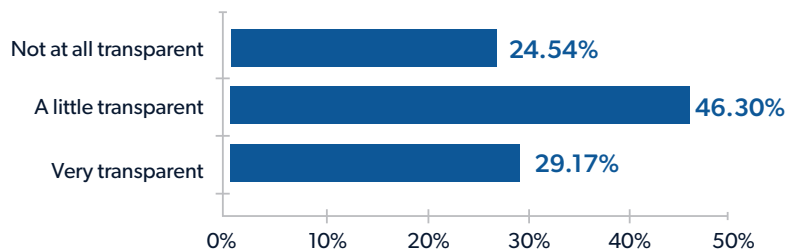
(Multiple selections allowed)



The largest cohort of respondents (38.82%) indicated that they wanted to go in-house for a better work/life balance. This is consistent with findings from our 2019 survey. There was a small increase in those who reported this (from 34.12% in 2019). Additionally, there was a drop in the number of those who indicated they'd like to go in-house for the opportunity to become a business decision-maker (from 24.71% in 2019 to 18.42% this year).

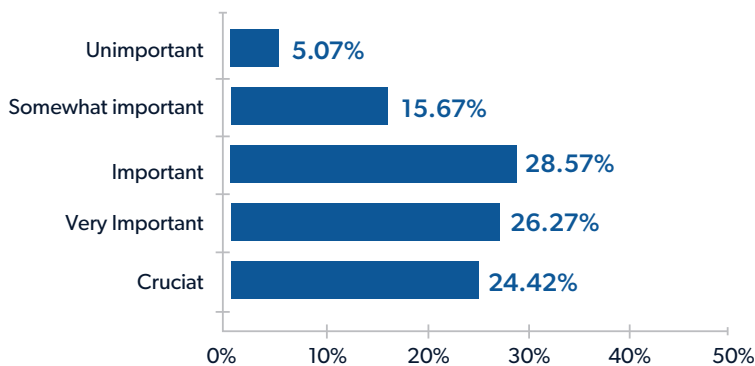
GOALS

How would you describe your firm's level of transparency regarding associate career paths (including feedback on whether an associate is on track for partnership)?



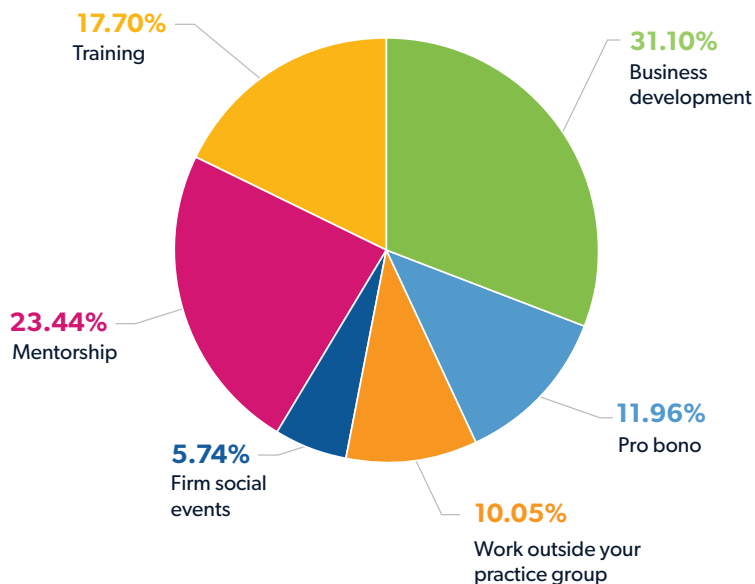
Almost 50% of respondents reported that their firms are **a little transparent** regarding associate career paths. This is also what the largest cohort of respondents indicated in the 2019 survey.

How important to you is your firm's transparency regarding associate career paths?



Almost 95% of respondents indicated that firm transparency regarding associate career paths is some level of important.

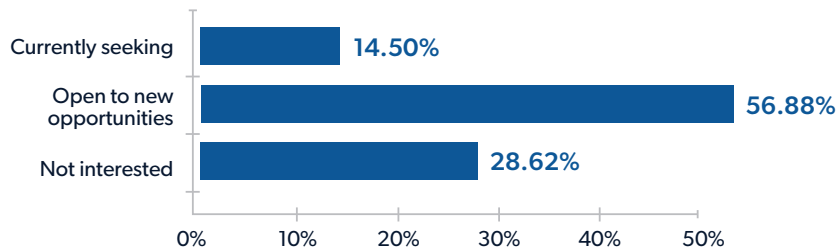
What would you like to spend more time doing?



The largest cohort of respondents (31.10%) reported they would like to be doing more **business development**. This was a slight drop from our 2019 survey, which had this at 33.17%.

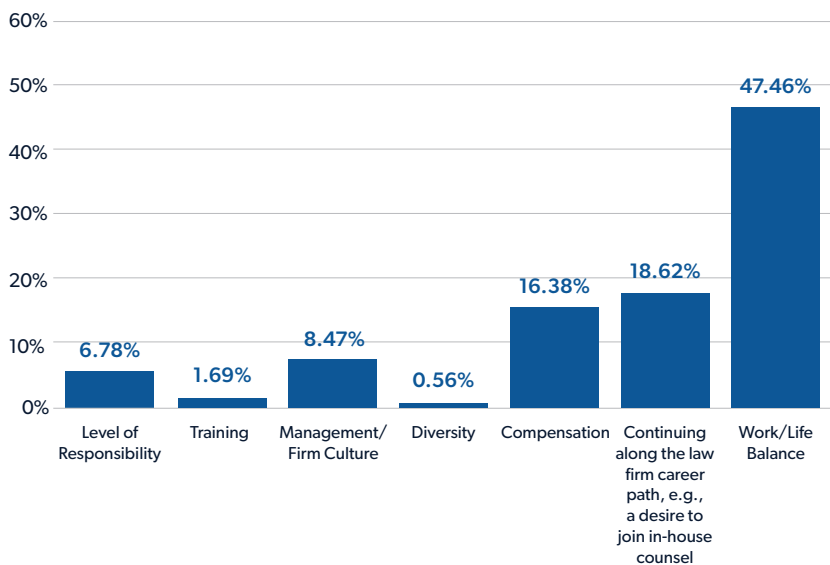
GOALS

How open are you to new job opportunities?



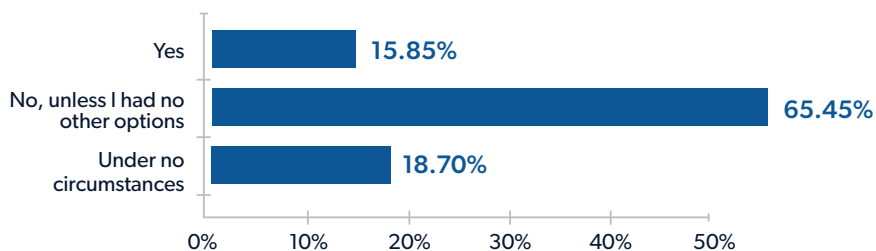
Over half of respondents reported that they are **open to new opportunities**. This is consistent with findings from our earlier survey.

Please indicate the most important reason for your openness to a new job opportunity. Dissatisfaction with:



Dissatisfaction with **work/life balance** was the most important reason for openness to a new job opportunity (47.46%). This was a shift from the last survey, in which dissatisfaction with compensation was the top reason. Dissatisfaction with diversity (0.56%) was the lowest ranking reason.

Would you consider working on a short-term assignment or contract basis?



The majority of respondents (65.45%) indicated that they would not consider working on a short-term assignment or contract basis **unless they had no other options**.

NEW QUESTIONS ABOUT GOALS

We asked respondents why they aspire to work at an ALSP and why they aspire to work in legal ops.

Despite what we hear in all the analysis and commentary about the direction of the legal industry, law firm associates seem either unaware or uninterested in career paths available in the emerging ALSP sector. There was a similarly noteworthy negligible interest in careers in legal operations, with questions about these two fields garnering little response from participants.

GENERATIONAL DIFFERENCES

Longitudinal Priorities Comparisons

The current generation of law firm leadership has outstayed their effectiveness.

	Absolutely disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
ALL	8.68%	18.06%	18.06%	38.54%	16.67%
ASSOCIATES	7.87%	14.81%	19.44%	39.81%	18.06%
PARTNERS	13.79%	27.59%	13.79%	36.21%	8.62%
MALES	12.84%	22.97%	18.24%	33.11%	12.84%
FEMALES	4.58%	13.74%	17.56%	45.04%	19.08%

The Millennial generation of lawyers is transforming law firm policies and culture for the better.

	Absolutely disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
ALL	3.82%	16.67%	25.35%	35.42%	18.75%
ASSOCIATES	2.78%	12.50%	23.15%	39.81%	21.76%
PARTNERS	5.17%	29.31%	36.21%	20.69%	8.62%
MALES	5.41%	16.22%	25.68%	31.08%	21.62%
FEMALES	1.53%	17.56%	22.90%	41.22%	16.79%

Associates agree more than partners that the Millennial generation is changing law firm policies and culture for the better, which makes sense. Notably though, women “somewhat agree” more than men, but men “strongly agree” more than women.

Compensation increases (including special bonuses) at many law firms are a fair reflection of associate contributions to firm profitability.

	Absolutely disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
ALL	11.46%	23.26%	14.58%	27.08%	23.61%
ASSOCIATES	12.96%	20.37%	11.11%	27.78%	27.78%
PARTNERS	6.90%	31.03%	25.86%	25.86%	10.34%
MALES	13.51%	15.54%	15.54%	29.05%	26.35%
FEMALES	9.16%	32.06%	12.21%	25.95%	20.61%

Almost 30% of associates (27.78%) strongly agreed that compensation increases are a fair reflection of associate contributions to firm profitability. Only 10.34% of partners felt this way.

Notably, 32.06% of women somewhat disagreed with this statement, while only 15.54% of men reported the same.

GENERATIONAL DIFFERENCES

Associate workloads have increased since compensation increases.

	Absolutely disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
ALL	2.44%	8.71%	26.83%	33.10%	28.92%
ASSOCIATES	1.40%	6.98%	26.05%	31.63%	33.95%
PARTNERS	6.90%	13.79%	29.31%	39.66%	10.34%
MALES	3.38%	9.46%	28.38%	32.43%	26.35%
FEMALES	1.54%	8.46%	25.38%	34.62%	30.00%

While there were no strong discrepancies among gender, 33.95% of associates strongly agreed that associate workloads have increased since compensation increases, while only 10.34% of partners reported the same.

Increased associate workloads are justified by the recent salary (and special bonus) increases.

	Absolutely disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
ALL	21.95%	34.15%	25.09%	14.98%	3.83%
ASSOCIATES	26.05%	34.88%	23.26%	12.56%	3.26%
PARTNERS	12.07%	32.76%	27.59%	22.41%	5.17%
MALES	23.65%	27.03%	27.70%	18.24%	3.38%
FEMALES	20.00%	41.54%	22.31%	12.31%	3.85%

26.05% of associates absolutely disagreed that increased associate workloads are justified by recent salary increases, while only 12.07% of partners felt the same. Notably, while 27.03% of males somewhat disagreed with this statement, over 40% of women (41.54%) somewhat disagreed.

Law firms should strive for maximum transparency with regard to compensation.

	Absolutely disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
ALL	3.13%	3.82%	7.99%	20.14%	64.93%
ASSOCIATES	3.24%	1.39%	5.56%	18.06%	71.76%
PARTNERS	3.45%	12.07%	12.07%	25.86%	46.55%
MALES	3.38%	3.38%	8.78%	13.51%	70.95%
FEMALES	2.29%	4.58%	6.11%	28.24%	58.78%

One of the largest discrepancies was among positions related to compensation transparency. While 71.76% of associates strongly agreed that law firms should strive for maximum transparency with regard to compensation, only 46.55% of partners felt this way.

Interestingly, 70.95% of men strongly agreed that maximum transparency should be the goal, while only 58.78% of women felt the same.

GENERATIONAL DIFFERENCES

Law firm partnership is much less desirable than it was a generation ago.

	Absolutely disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
ALL	5.21%	9.03%	9.72%	31.25%	44.79%
ASSOCIATES	3.70%	6.94%	9.72%	30.56%	49.07%
PARTNERS	10.34%	18.97%	6.90%	32.76%	31.03%
MALES	6.08%	10.14%	9.46%	29.73%	44.59%
FEMALES	4.58%	8.40%	9.16%	33.59%	44.27%

Almost 50% of associates strongly agreed that law firm partnership is much less desirable than it was a generation ago, compared with the 31.03% of partners that felt the same.

The partners at my firm genuinely care about associate professional development.

	Absolutely disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
ALL	13.54%	26.04%	14.24%	31.60%	14.58%
ASSOCIATES	15.74%	28.24%	14.81%	27.78%	13.43%
PARTNERS	5.17%	17.24%	10.34%	48.28%	18.97%
MALES	14.86%	24.32%	12.16%	31.08%	17.57%
FEMALES	11.45%	28.24%	14.50%	33.59%	12.21%

A diverse and inclusive workforce should be a priority for law firms.

	Absolutely disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
ALL	2.80%	5.59%	11.54%	27.62%	52.45%
ASSOCIATES	2.80%	5.14%	10.28%	26.17%	55.61%
PARTNERS	3.45%	8.62%	10.34%	32.76%	44.83%
MALES	3.40%	7.48%	14.97%	25.85%	48.30%
FEMALES	1.54%	3.85%	6.15%	30.77%	57.69%

While the largest cohorts all strongly agreed that a diverse and inclusive workforce should be a priority for law firms, the disparities between genders and positions is notable.

GENERATIONAL DIFFERENCES

U.S. law firm culture is inherently biased against women.

	Absolutely disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
ALL	5.56%	15.97%	14.93%	32.29%	31.25%
ASSOCIATES	3.70%	13.43%	14.81%	32.41%	35.65%
PARTNERS	8.62%	25.86%	10.34%	37.93%	17.24%
MALES	8.11%	25.00%	18.24%	29.05%	19.59%
FEMALES	2.29%	6.11%	11.45%	35.88%	44.27%

While the disparity between genders is somewhat expected here, it is still notable, with over 80% of female respondents somewhat or strongly agreeing that U.S. law firm culture is inherently biased against women, and only 48.64% of men reporting the same.

Also notable is the difference in perception between positions. 35.65% of associates strongly agreed with the statement, while only 17.24% of partners felt the same.

U.S. law firm culture is inherently biased against racially diverse lawyers.

	Absolutely disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
ALL	8.45%	14.08%	15.14%	27.46%	34.86%
ASSOCIATES	6.54%	12.15%	14.49%	26.64%	40.19%
PARTNERS	12.50%	23.21%	14.29%	33.93%	16.07%
MALES	12.33%	21.23%	15.75%	23.97%	26.71%
FEMALES	3.88%	6.98%	13.95%	31.01%	44.19%

While there are disparities with both gender and position here, the difference between partners and associates is particularly notable. 40.19% of associates strongly agreed that U.S. law firm culture is inherently biased against racially diverse lawyers, whereas only 16.07% of partners reported the same.

Additionally, while 44.19% of women strongly agreed with this statement, only 26.71% of men reported the same.

Diminished associate loyalty to firms is an inevitable consequence of fundamental changes in the law firm business model.

	Absolutely disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
ALL	4.88%	10.10%	17.07%	32.40%	35.54%
ASSOCIATES	4.63%	8.80%	16.67%	32.41%	37.50%
PARTNERS	5.26%	15.79%	15.79%	33.33%	29.82%
MALES	6.08%	10.81%	14.86%	32.43%	35.81%
FEMALES	3.05%	9.92%	17.56%	32.82%	36.64%

GENERATIONAL DIFFERENCES

Some form of non-attorney ownership of U.S. law firms would benefit the legal profession.

	Absolutely disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
ALL	25.78%	21.95%	26.48%	16.72%	9.06%
ASSOCIATES	23.26%	20.93%	29.30%	17.67%	8.84%
PARTNERS	36.21%	27.59%	17.24%	10.34%	8.62%
MALES	34.46%	20.95%	18.92%	16.22%	9.46%
FEMALES	17.69%	23.85%	33.08%	17.69%	7.69%

There is a persistent gender pay gap at law firms.

	Absolutely disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
ALL	9.72%	13.89%	24.65%	29.51%	22.22%
ASSOCIATES	9.72%	13.43%	23.15%	31.48%	22.22%
PARTNERS	10.34%	17.24%	27.59%	22.41%	22.41%
MALES	14.86%	20.95%	30.41%	22.97%	10.81%
FEMALES	3.82%	6.87%	18.32%	35.88%	35.11%

35.11% of women strongly agreed that there is a persistent gender pay gap at law firms, while only 10.81% of males strongly agreed. Notably, there were no significant disparities among associates and partners.

My law firm has made strides in the past year to address workplace gender issues.

	Absolutely disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
ALL	11.23%	19.65%	32.98%	29.47%	6.67%
ASSOCIATES	12.09%	21.86%	33.49%	26.98%	5.58%
PARTNERS	5.36%	12.50%	30.36%	42.86%	8.93%
MALES	6.12%	14.97%	36.05%	32.65%	10.20%
FEMALES	16.15%	24.62%	29.23%	26.92%	3.08%

Interestingly, while 42.86% of partners somewhat agreed that their law firm has made strides in the past year to address workplace gender issues, only 26.98% of associates felt the same.

16.15% of women strongly disagreed with this statement, while only 6.12% of men strongly disagreed.

GENERATIONAL DIFFERENCES

My law firm has made strides in the past year to combat racial discrimination.

	Absolutely disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
ALL	12.68%	14.44%	26.06%	35.92%	10.92%
ASSOCIATES	13.55%	14.49%	22.90%	38.79%	10.28%
PARTNERS	7.14%	14.29%	37.50%	28.57%	12.50%
MALES	11.49%	11.49%	26.35%	35.81%	14.86%
FEMALES	13.28%	17.19%	25.78%	36.72%	7.02%

Associates somewhat agreed more than partners (38.92% vs. 28.57%) that their firm has made strides in the past year to combat racial discrimination.

The pandemic has revealed how law firm leverage models favor partners at the expense of associates.

	Absolutely disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
ALL	5.24%	8.74%	20.98%	27.27%	37.76%
ASSOCIATES	2.78%	5.56%	20.37%	27.31%	43.98%
PARTNERS	16.07%	21.43%	19.64%	26.79%	16.07%
MALES	7.43%	12.16%	17.57%	25.68%	37.16%
FEMALES	2.31%	5.38%	24.62%	28.46%	39.23%

There was a large gap between associates and partners who strongly agreed that the pandemic has revealed how law firm leverage models favor partners at the expense of associates. 43.98% of associates strongly agreed, while only 16.07% of partners reported the same.

The legal industry is more of a profession than a business.

	Absolutely disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
ALL	22.03%	29.72%	24.48%	17.48%	6.29%
ASSOCIATES	22.22%	31.48%	24.07%	16.67%	5.56%
PARTNERS	21.43%	25.00%	23.21%	21.43%	8.93%
MALES	25.00%	27.03%	24.32%	19.59%	4.05%
FEMALES	17.69%	32.31%	24.62%	16.15%	9.23%