

BTI Associate Satisfaction A-Listers 2026: BTI Survey of Law Firms Where Associates are Happiest



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Associate Satisfaction and Law Firm Rankings for the **7 Activities Most Valued** by Associates:

- Helping With Their Career
- Offering Associates Access to Training
- Mentoring Associates
- Opportunity to Grow Within Their Firm
- Partners are Invested in Individual Associates' Success
- Highest Number of Extremely Satisfied Associates
- Law Firms With the Best Paid Associates

Introduction

Associate Flight Risk Surges – Most Firms Underestimate the Threat

Fresh 2026 survey data exposes the reality:

- **46.2%** of associates say now is a **great time** to make a lateral move
- **18.7%** call it **pretty good**
- Only **8%** believe it's **not a good time** at all

The remaining 27.1% stay agnostic – poised to jump the moment the right opportunity appears.

Money Won't Anchor Them

Just **16%** rank compensation as the top reason to stay. Associates – especially women – demand turbocharged career acceleration above everything else.

Gender Gaps Widen the Risk

Women associates consistently report lower satisfaction, less perceived firm commitment, weaker mentoring, and higher underpayment feelings than men – creating two distinct audiences with different needs and flight triggers.

Firms Delivering Real Career Building Behaviors Win the Retention Race

Partners and practices fueling genuine advancement keep top talent far longer – turning flight risk into long-term commitment, particularly for women who value targeted development.

Introduction

That's Why BTI Launched Its Second Large-Scale Associate Satisfaction Survey

Over 5,000 responses uncovered the **7 pivotal drivers** of satisfaction, retention, and job happiness – then asked associates to rank their own firm on each:

- Commitment to Help in Their Career
- Informal One-to-One Mentoring
- Optimism in Their Career
- Optimism in Their Career at Their Current Firm
- Compensation
- Access to Training They Need
- Partners Invested in Their Career

The BTI Associate Satisfaction A-Listers 2026 Delivers

- What associates truly want and value
- The firms associates crown highest on each driver – and exactly why
- Proven strategies to strengthen retention
- Critical differences in women associates' expectations, perceptions, and satisfaction vs. men
- Clear benchmarks: where your firm stands today – and precise steps to elevate satisfaction, loyalty, and productivity for all associates

This independent, associate-sourced report has rapidly become the essential guide for winning – and keeping – elite legal talent across genders.

Order your copy today and gain the edge in the intensifying war for associates.

Associate Thinking About Firms and Careers

59% *Recommend their current firm to a peer*



- *Feel their career moving forward*
- *Are trusted*
- *Partners actively help advance their careers*

-17%

Women's job satisfaction is 17% lower than men

34%

Associates believe they are well mentored

Are optimistic about career at their current firm



67.8%



73.4%



Associates want to feel as though their career is not only supported – but pushed ahead

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BTI Survey of Law Firms Where Associates are Happiest**



Law Firms Best At Cultivating Associate Job Satisfaction



Associates point to 189 law firms serving as home to the largest number of associates showing the most satisfaction – with 7 activities driving associate job satisfaction.

These firms deliver on a set of formal and informal protocols to deliver on activities most important to associates.

We are pleased to present the firms associates identify as creating job satisfaction in the most tumultuous and difficult times law firms – and associates – have faced.

Best at Helping Associates in Their Career | 29

Best Access to Training | 33

Best at Mentoring Associates | 37

Best Opportunity to Grow Within Their Firm | 41

Law Firms With Partners Invested in Individual Associates' Success | 45

Law Firms with Highest Number of Extremely Satisfied Associates | 50

Law Firms With the Best Paid Associates | 54

Law Firms Ranked Highest by Women Associates



Law firms are widely committed to women's initiatives both within and outside their firm. Women associates tell us law firms bring different levels of commitment.

They also tell us some law firms bring different levels of understanding to their unique expectations and needs. Women associates also tell us these firms bring varying levels of action.

We highlight the 138 firms with the most women associates giving them the highest marks.

Best at Helping Associates in Their Career | 60

Best Access to Training | 64

Best at Mentoring Associates | 68

Best Opportunity to Grow Within Their Firm | 72

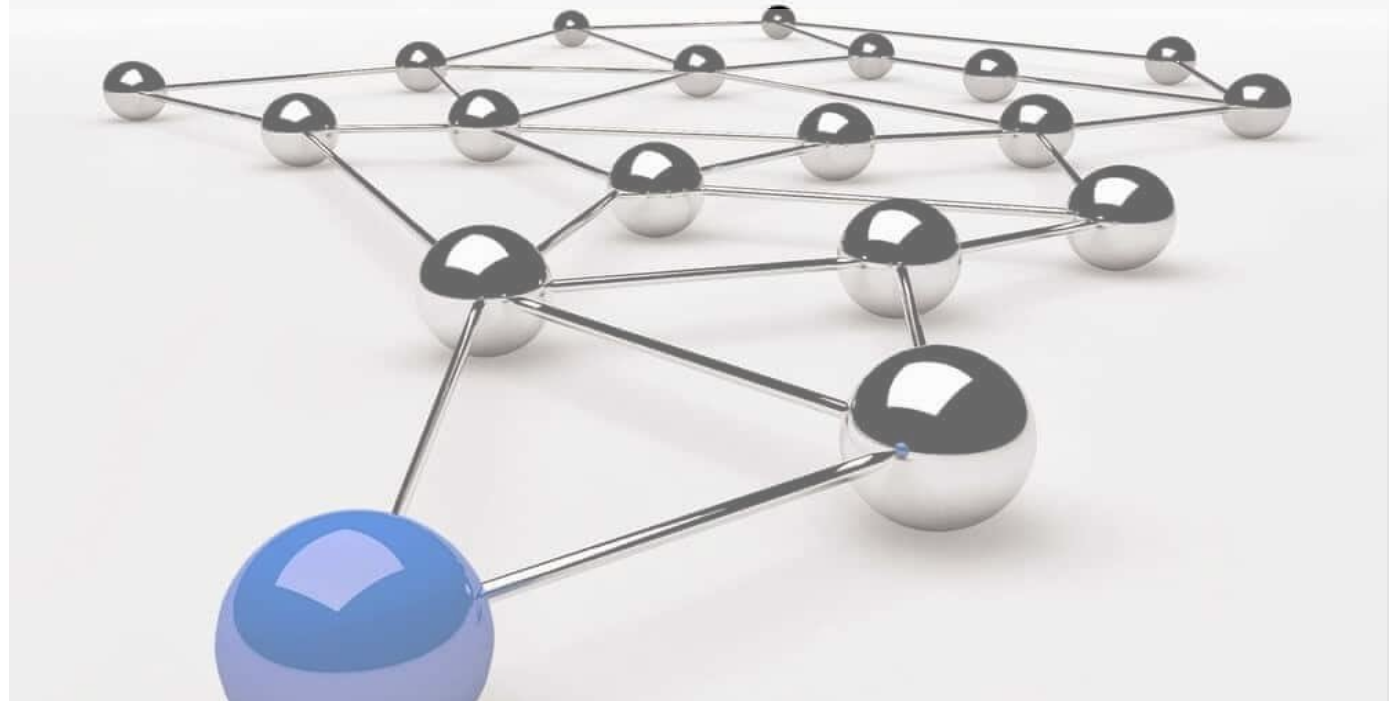
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Law Firms With the Best Paid Associates | 84

BTI Survey of Law Firms Where Associates are Happiest 2026

Methodology



Ground Rules for the BTI Survey of Law Firms Where Associates are Happiest



No law firm submissions, self-referrals, suggestions, or payments



All associate responses and comments are confidential and anonymous



Analyzed more than 27 aspects of the associate experience and associate satisfaction with no prompts or suggestions for names of law firms



Analyzed data based on the most important factors using quantitative and qualitative methodologies



Developed this analysis to measure associate satisfaction with their jobs at their current law firm

Our Methodology and Approach

INDEPENDENT, UNBIASED RESEARCH, BASED SOLELY ON ASSOCIATE FEEDBACK

1

Conducted 190 in-depth, open-ended telephone interviews to uncover drivers and attributes behind associate job satisfaction

2

Strategically designed online surveys to capture additional associate thinking and experience

3

Deployed the survey in 4 waves over the period of March 2021 to March 2026

4

Received more than 5,000 individual online responses

5

Analyzed results to reveal key drivers and attributes underpinning associate job satisfaction

6

Ranked law firm performance based solely on associate data and input

7

Isolated key differences between men and women associates

8

Ranked law firm performance based on men and women associate satisfaction

BTI Consulting Group

About Us



What We Do

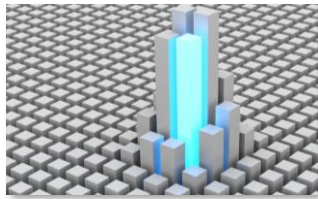
For 30 years, we've successfully helped our clients strategically drive revenue, boost performance, attract and retain clients, develop more business in new and existing markets, and create enduring relationships with our data-driven customized programs and solutions tailored to meet each client's specific and unique needs. We examine the market from your client's perspective with a measurable, innovative, and high-impact approach.

From in-depth independent research to one-on-one interviews with C-suite executives, top legal decision makers, and market leaders, our expertise and insight will help you understand – as well as benchmark – how clients acquire, manage, and evaluate their professional services providers.



Client Feedback Programs

We help you reveal powerful, defining client insights you simply can't get anywhere else through innovative, world-class feedback.



Business Development Training

We help you and your firm catapult your business development skills, culture, and mindset, fast.



Client Service Excellence

We help you redefine how clients think about you and your firm for the short- and long-term.



Associate Feedback Surveys

Immediately improve associate satisfaction and engagement by opening a dialogue with your associates. They are eager to provide feedback and value a formal platform to have their voice heard. The benefits are both immediate and long lasting.

Market Research, Expertise, and Insights

AUTHORITATIVE, INNOVATIVE, AND PRACTICAL ADVICE FROM OUR RESEARCH

Law firms who would otherwise have little insight into corporate counsel hiring decisions, goals, law firm preferences, market positions, and detailed recommendations can now gain access to the same research used by the largest and best performing firms in the world. The data and insight found in BTI's reports are used to train attorneys, guide business development, inform strategy, and calibrate market trends against firm tactics. In short, you get many of the benefits of a custom study commissioned for your firm, at a fraction of the cost. These insights are proven to drive growth and client retention and protect fees.

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BTI Super Listener A-Team 2026



BTI Super Listener A-Team 2026 is your guide to business development excellence. Nothing beats these activities for developing new business. The best business developers know this – and live by it. This exclusive report lays out how clients define these behaviors – and the firms clients name as best at each one.

 **Order Now**

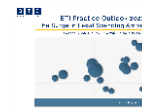
BTI Litigation Outlook 2026



Our 10th BTI Litigation Outlook uncovers how client behavior and spending are changing in 2026. This comprehensive deep dive immediately helps you identify the most current and vexing client needs – helping you meet these needs before competitors realize there's new work for the taking.

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Your annual guide to targeting your clients' legal dollars with precision. Guide your business plans with insight straight from your clients on how they plan to divvy up their outside counsel budgets. Plus, learn the 11 trends shaping the pandemic-led legal market in 2026 and more.

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Questions? Comments?



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