News | **Law Firms - Mid Size**

The Pipeline of Big Law Marketing Officers Making the Move to Midsize Firms

"There are a lot of Am Law 50-100 [marketing] directors who feel kind of stuck and can't get to the CMO level in the Am Law 50-100 sphere, so they find less resistance going to a mid-sized firm and becoming a chief," said Jason Caramanico, senior managing director at Celeritas Recruiting.

July 14, 2026 at 04:30 PM By **Abigail Adcox**

Credit: Aan/Adobe Stock

What You Need to Know

- The number of Big Law marketing and business development professionals making the move to midsize law firms has been increasing, according to several legal observers.
- An interest in moving up to the C-Suite or a director role and lifestyle changes are two of the biggest motivating factors for professionals making the career move, observers say.

Big Law marketing and business development professionals jumping to midsize law firms is becoming more frequent, according to several legal observers, as more midsize law firms are investing in talent in these areas.

Career progression and lifestyle changes are two of the biggest motivating factors for business development and marketing professionals making the move from Big Law to a midsize firm, observers say.

Jason Caramanico, senior managing director at Celeritas Recruiting, said he's seen more midsize and boutique law firms recruiting business development and marketing professionals.

"That's a market that's really ripe for disruption, as far as bringing in high-caliber, strategic business development and strategic growth professionals," said Caramanico. "Bringing in those professionals that know how to get the firm from A to B and take them to the next level from a growth standpoint and really be an advisor when it comes to client acquisition and client satisfaction and bringing in more revenue."

A move up in title and an interest in finding a better work-life balance are two motivating factors for professionals that have made the move, according to Caramanico.

"There are a lot of Am Law 50-100 [marketing] directors who feel kind of stuck and can't get to the CMO level in the Am Law 50-100 sphere, so they find less resistance going to a mid-sized firm and becoming a chief, so there's a fair amount of that going on. You [also] have your chiefs in Big Law who may want to scale back and don't want to travel globally as much, they want to have more time with their family," Caramanico said.

Erika Steinberg, founder of CMO2Go, who leads a group of midsize marketing professionals, has also noticed more professionals making the career move, noting that sometimes it comes down to being able to build more relationships at a midsize law firm.

"What I hear more than anything is the relationships that they can form, that's what I hear more than anything, is that they know at the very least every single partner, and actually have good relationships with every single partner, and they really get to know their lawyers, they feel like they know the firm, they feel very connected to firm leadership," said Steinberg.

Amy Neilson, chief marketing officer at Skarzynski Marick & Black, made a similar career move several years ago. Neilson had previously served as senior regional business development manager at Baker McKenzie until 2022.

"For me, it was a brand-new position, so it was even more exciting to be like, 'Oh, I can start the processes, I can look at what they have and see what I think will work, and really build something from the ground [up]," said Neilson.

"It's the thing that keeps me excited about being here is continuing to have the flexibility to come up with ideas and implement them pretty quickly with very little bureaucracy, I have a seat at the table with the executive committee," Neilson added.

However, making the move from a Big Law firm to a midsize firm doesn't come without its challenges, no matter the position.

Neilson said that you "really find out how to work lean and within a budget and very strategically when you're at a small firm."

"The difficulties usually are in support, coming from a much larger law firm environment, they are more accustomed to a larger infrastructure, a better toolbox," said Caramanico. "So it's getting used to an environment where you're really rolling up your sleeves again, bootstrapping in some areas, and having to build out maybe an infrastructure, whether it's technology, people, or process."

More professionals are making the move as midsize firms are prioritizing growth and profitability over cost management, according to Actionstep's 2026 US Midsize Law Firm Priorities report, which surveyed 274 respondents from midsize firms.

The report emphasized that midsize firms have to ensure their infrastructure can support their growth goals, as Law.com previously reported.

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