

THE LAW FIRM OF THE FUTURE

## Associate Hiring and Attrition: Insights on Recruiting, Retention, and the Legal Talent

by

***Fiona Trevelyan***

President and CEO, NALP Foundation

***Jennifer Mandery***

Vice President for Research, NALP Foundation

***Skip Horne***

Vice President for Engagement, NALP Foundation

***Uri Gutfreund***

Senior VP & Managing Principal, Ames & Gough

***John Remsen, Jr.***

President, TheRemsenGroup

MPF WEBINAR

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Smart Strategies for the Forward Thinking Law Firm

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# Fiona Trevelyan Hornblower

President & CEO

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*Joined the NALP Foundation Team in March 2020*

As President and CEO, Fiona Trevelyan Hornblower provides leadership for the Foundation's mission to improve the quality and delivery of legal services through research, education, and the expansion of diversity within the legal profession.

Prior to joining the Foundation, Fiona served as Assistant Dean for Career Development and Public Service at Boston University School of Law for over six years, and as the National Director of Legal Recruiting for Bingham McCutchen for seven years. She practiced as a litigator at Bingham before leading the firm's recruiting, and has also worked as an independent consultant to law firms and as a Principal in a boutique practice. She has held numerous leadership positions in both national and local legal and recruiting organizations, including NALP and the ABA. She regularly publishes and speaks on a wide variety of issues in the legal profession.

Fiona received her BA from Harvard University and her JD from Boston College Law School. Following law school, she clerked for the Hon. Frank M. Coffin, senior judge for the United States Court of Appeals for the First Circuit.



Jennifer C.  
**Mandery**

Vice President for Research  
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*Joined the NALP Foundation Team in August 2011*

As Vice President for Research, Jennifer Mandery provides expert leadership on the methodological, data and analytical aspects of the Foundation's research projects and expertly transforms data into critical insights and delivers actionable and strategic guidance.

Prior to joining the Foundation, Jennifer served as a Consultant and Senior Research Analyst for Thomson Reuters where she conducted research within the legal industry and consumer markets. She has co-authored multiple research study publications and industry articles, and frequently presents on the Foundation's behalf to managing partners, hiring partners, chief talent officers, law school deans, faculty and legal administrators on a variety of legal industry topics.

Jennifer received her BBA from the University of North Dakota and completed additional coursework in advanced and applied research. She serves as an authority on multiple quantitative and qualitative research techniques.



# Skip Horne

Vice President for Engagement  
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*Joined the NALP Foundation Team in September 2020*

As Vice President for Engagement, Skip Horne plays a key role in enhancing the Foundation's visibility and reputation by working closely with law firms, law schools, corporations, individual donors, and research and partner organizations to expand our fundraising and membership profile.

Prior to joining the Foundation, Skip served as the Senior Assistant Dean for External Relations at Santa Clara University School of Law. He has also worked at Latham & Watkins LLP, the University of San Diego School of Law, the University of Texas School of Law, and the University of Melbourne in Australia where he completed a strategic engagement as a Careers Consultant with Trinity College. Skip has served as the President of NALP (2002-03) and the President of the National LGBT Bar Foundation (2010-12), and has been active with a number of associations including the ABA, AALS, LSAC, BALRA, and SDLRA.

Skip received his MBA from the Darden School of Business at the University of Virginia and his BSFS *cum laude* from the Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University.

# The MPF Webinar Series



The MPF Webinar Series: Building the Law Firm of the Future

## Associate Hiring and Attrition: Insights on Recruiting, Retention and the Legal Talent Market

An MPF Webinar with Fiona Trevelyan, Jennifer Mandery, and Skip Horne

July 16, 2025 – 2:00-3:00pm ET



## Welcome



### Uri Gutfreund

Senior Vice President and Managing Principal, Ames & Gough



### John Remsen, Jr.

President and CEO, Managing Partner Forum  
President, TheRemsenGroup



# The MPF Webinar Series



## Today's Guest Speakers



**Fiona Trevelyan**  
President and CEO, NALP Foundation



**Jennifer Mandery**  
Vice President for Research, NALP Foundation



**Skip Horne**  
Vice President for Engagement, NALP Foundation



# The MPF Webinar Series



## UPCOMING PROGRAMS IN 2025

- **MPF Webinar Series** – Third Wednesdays @ 2pm ET
- **The MPF Fall Symposium** – *Empowering Women* – October 7-8, 2025, in Chicago
- **The MPF Weekly** – Friday mornings
- **MPF Listserv** and Monthly **MPF Zoom Calls**
- MPF Website – [www.ManagingPartnerForum.org](http://www.ManagingPartnerForum.org)



## TODAY'S WEBINAR

- **Associate Hiring and Attrition:  
Insights on Recruiting, Retention and the Legal Talent Market**
- 95 Managing Partners and Law Firm Leaders
- Registrant Survey Results and Audience Polling Questions
- On-Demand Recording, Handout Materials
- Your Feedback on Today's Session



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**AUDIENCE POLLING QUESTION**

**How many lawyers are with your law firm?**

Percentage	Lawyer Count Range
7.69%	Less than 10 lawyers
30.77%	10-25 lawyers
17.95%	26-50 lawyers
33.33%	51-100 lawyers
10.26%	More than 100 lawyers

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THE MPF 2025 LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

# STRATEGIC VISION

Empowering Law Firm Leaders to Shape Tomorrow

MAY 7-8, 2025 ♦ CAPITAL CITY CLUB ♦ ATLANTA, GEORGIA



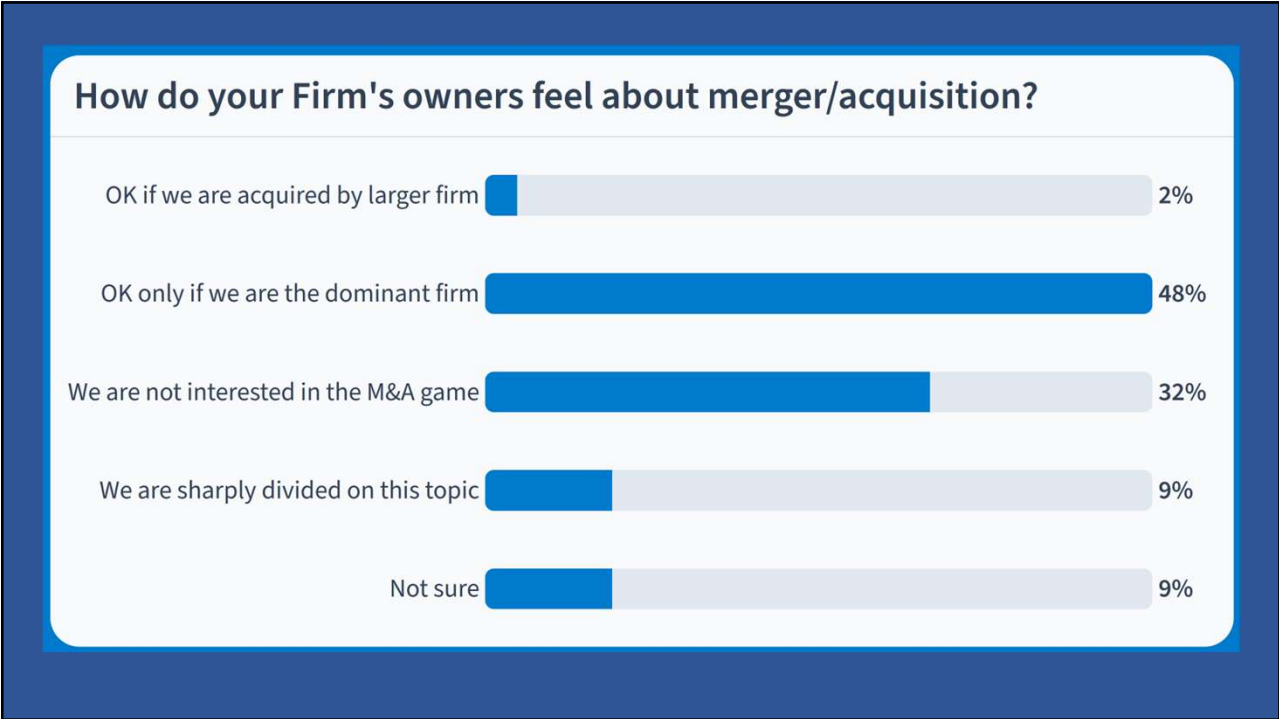
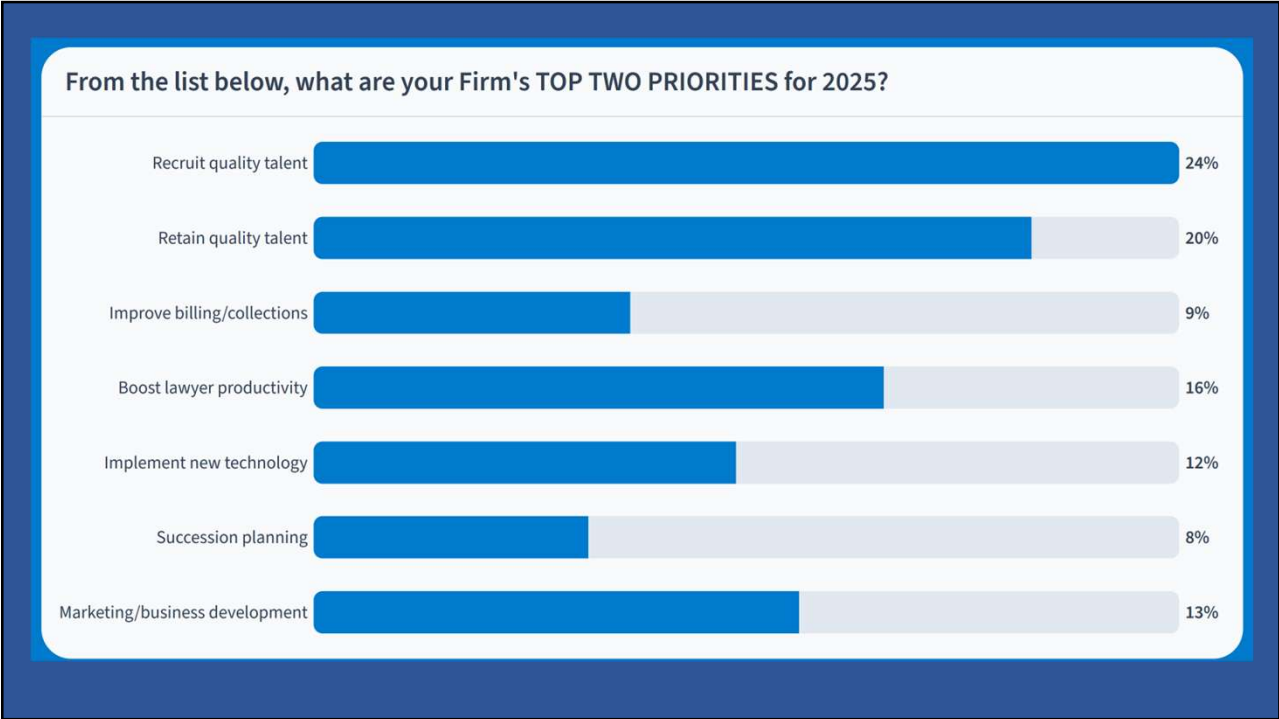
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## Conference Participants

- **105** managing partners and firm leaders
- Leading firms with **10-100** lawyers
- **25** US states, **2** Canadian provinces, Puerto Rico, Canada, BWI
- **65%** of you have been here before

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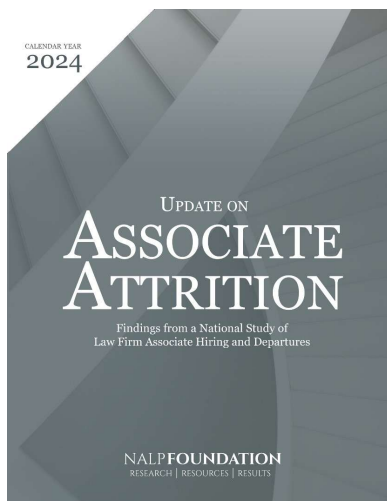
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### CY 2024 Attrition Study

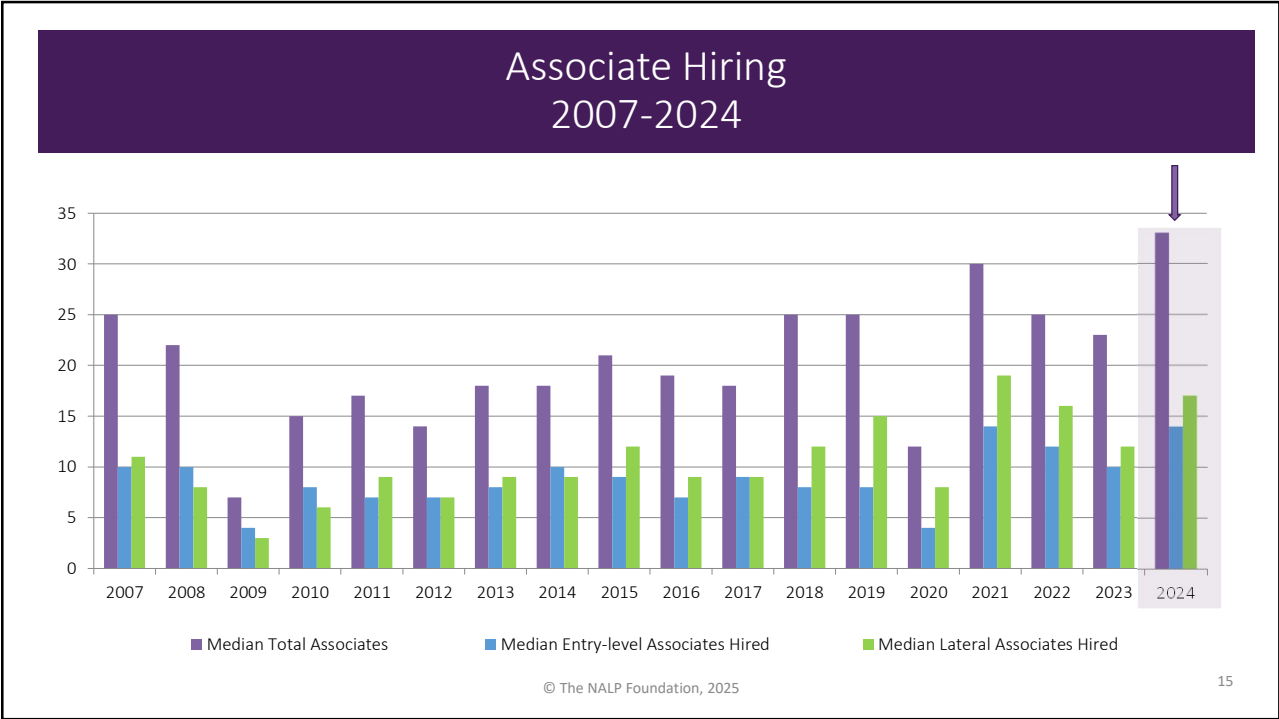


- Data collected from 119 law firms across the U.S. and Canada
  - 6,092 associate hires
  - 3,884 associate departures
- Empiric data aggregated; also segmented by firm size and demographic features
- New queries on:
  - Career-related shifts to education and government
  - Desire for remote or flexible work arrangements
- Ongoing queries:
  - Rehires
  - Virtual hires
  - Departure date tracking for each associate
  - Timing on when associates obtained their firm positions
  - Detailed data on associates' departure reasons and their next professional destinations
  - Partnership aspirations
  - Outplacement and career coaching prior to departures
- **Full report was released April 24, 2025.**

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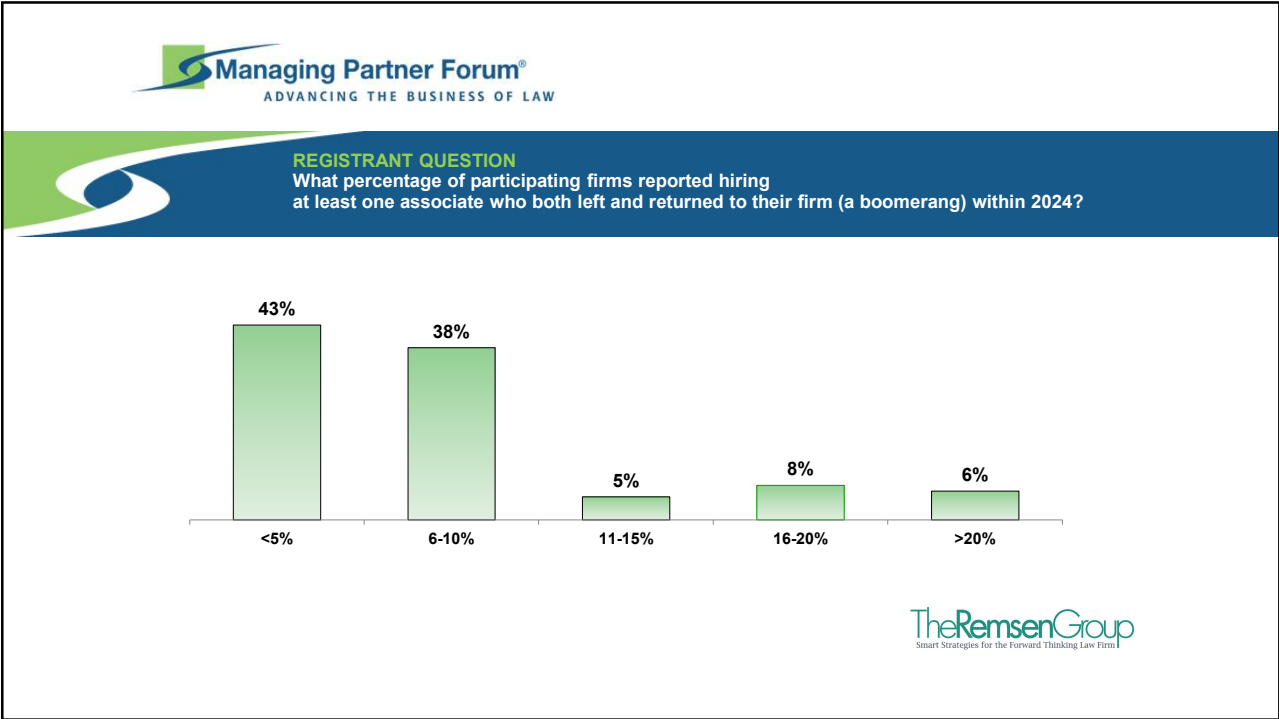
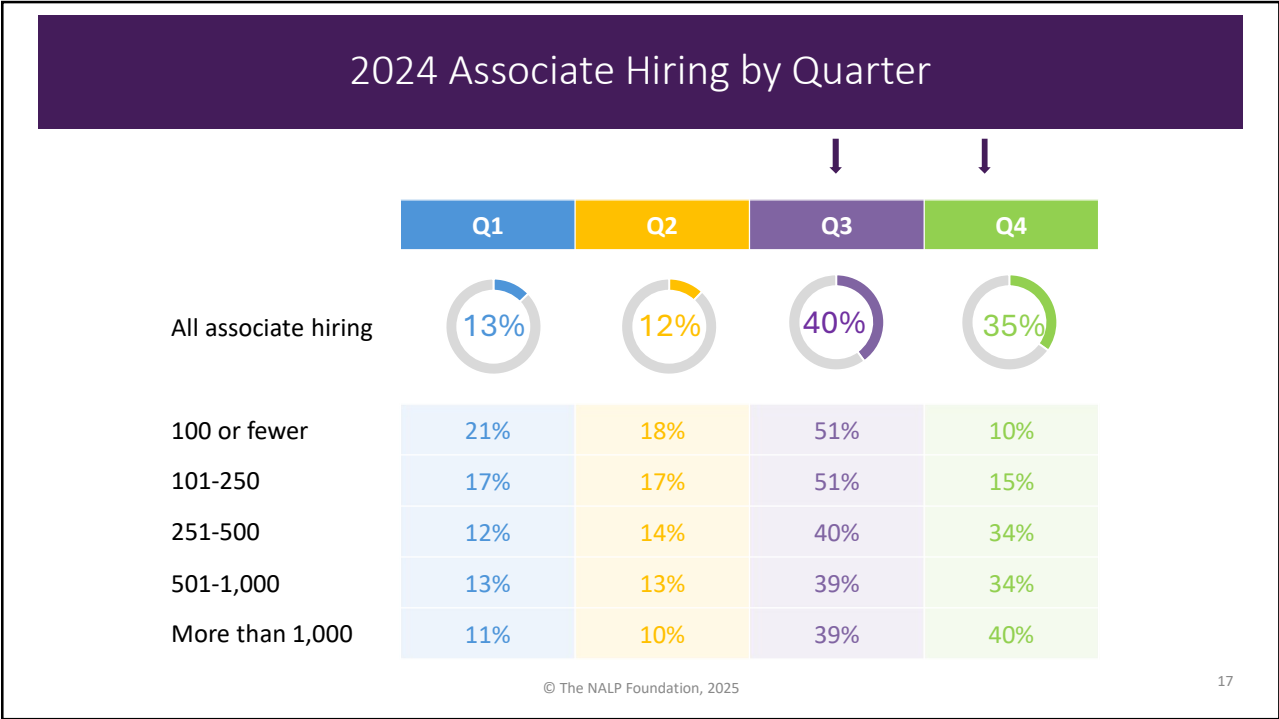


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### 2024 Rehires as a Percent of Total 2024 Associate Hiring



**49%**

of participating firms reported hiring at least one former associate.



**15%**

of participating firms reported hiring at least one associate who both left and returned to their firm within 2024.



**11%**

“Boomerang” associates represented 11% of total 2024 associate hiring.

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### Associate Attrition Rate Overall and by Firm Size 2007-2024

Year	Overall	100 or fewer attorneys	101-250 attorneys	251-500 attorneys	More than 500 attorneys
→ 2024	20%	31%	19%	17%	18%
2023	18%	19%	20%	16%	16%
2022	20%	16%	21%	21%	19%
2021	26%	27%	25%	24%	28%
2020	16%	15%	15%	17%	15%
2019	18%	15%	18%	19%	19%
2018	19%	15%	20%	20%	20%
2017	16%	16%	14%	18%	18%
2016	16%	15%	14%	18%	18%
2015	20%	20%	20%	21%	19%
2014	18%	17%	17%	19%	19%
2013	17%	17%	17%	16%	17%
2012	17%	13%	17%	18%	18%
2011	18%	15%	18%	20%	19%
2010	18%	19%	15%	19%	18%
2009	17%	16%	16%	19%	18%
2008	16%	16%	15%	17%	16%
2007	18%	17%	17%	18%	21%

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**REGISTRANT QUESTION**  
Which three demographic cohorts tend to have longer tenures at law firms?

Cohort	Percentage
Minority Associates	3%
White Associates	14%
Lateral Associates	36%
First-Year Associates	15%
Summer Associates	30%


## 2024 Associate Attrition Rates: Demographic Cohorts and Regions

- Male – 22%
- Female – 20%
- Non-binary – 23%
- White – 19%
- Associates of Color – 24%
- Mid-Atlantic – 17%
- Midwest – 18%
- Northeast – 23%
- Southeast – 20%
- West/Rocky Mountain – 24%

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# Why Associates Leave

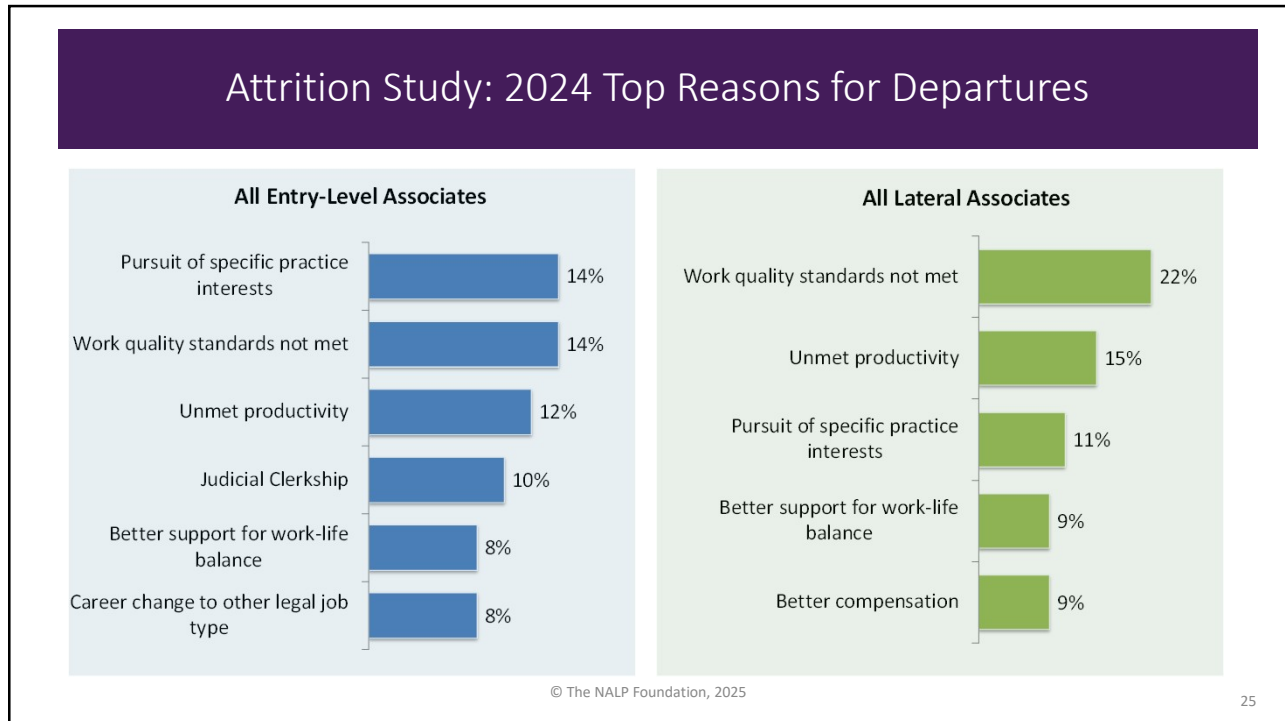
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**REGISTRANT QUESTION**  
From the list below, what do you think are the top three reasons firms cited as the reasons for lateral associate departures?

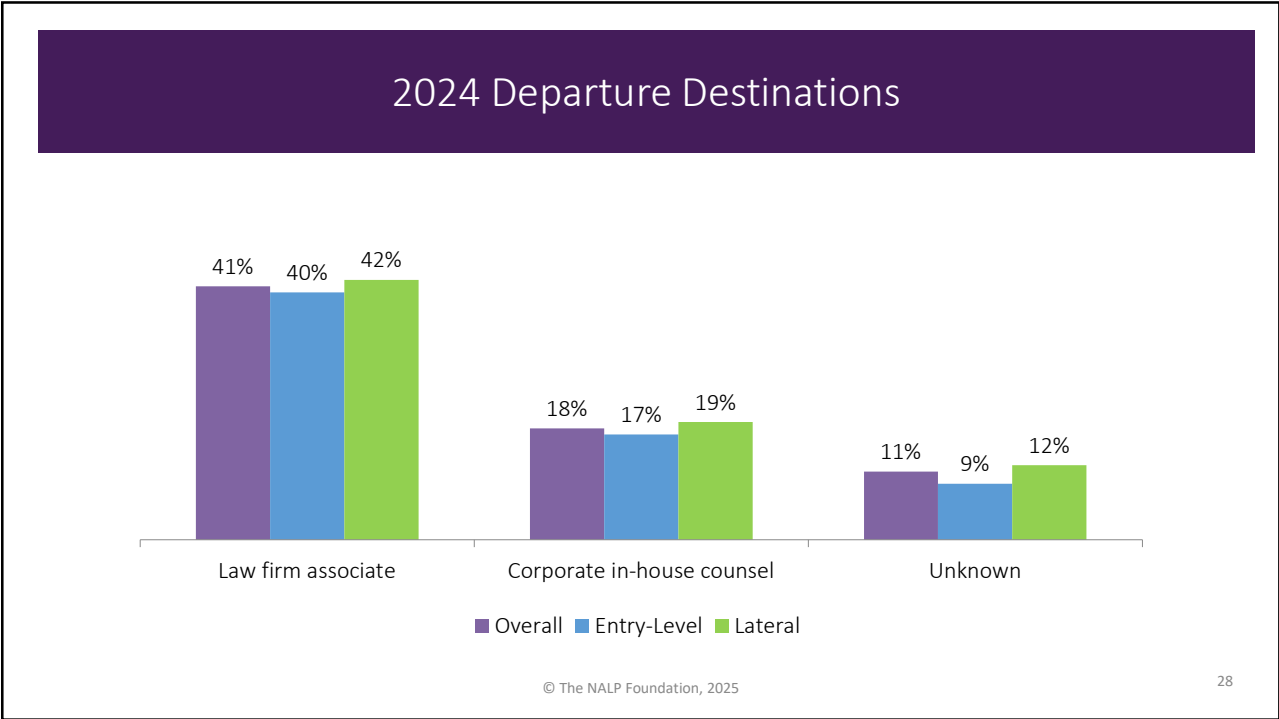
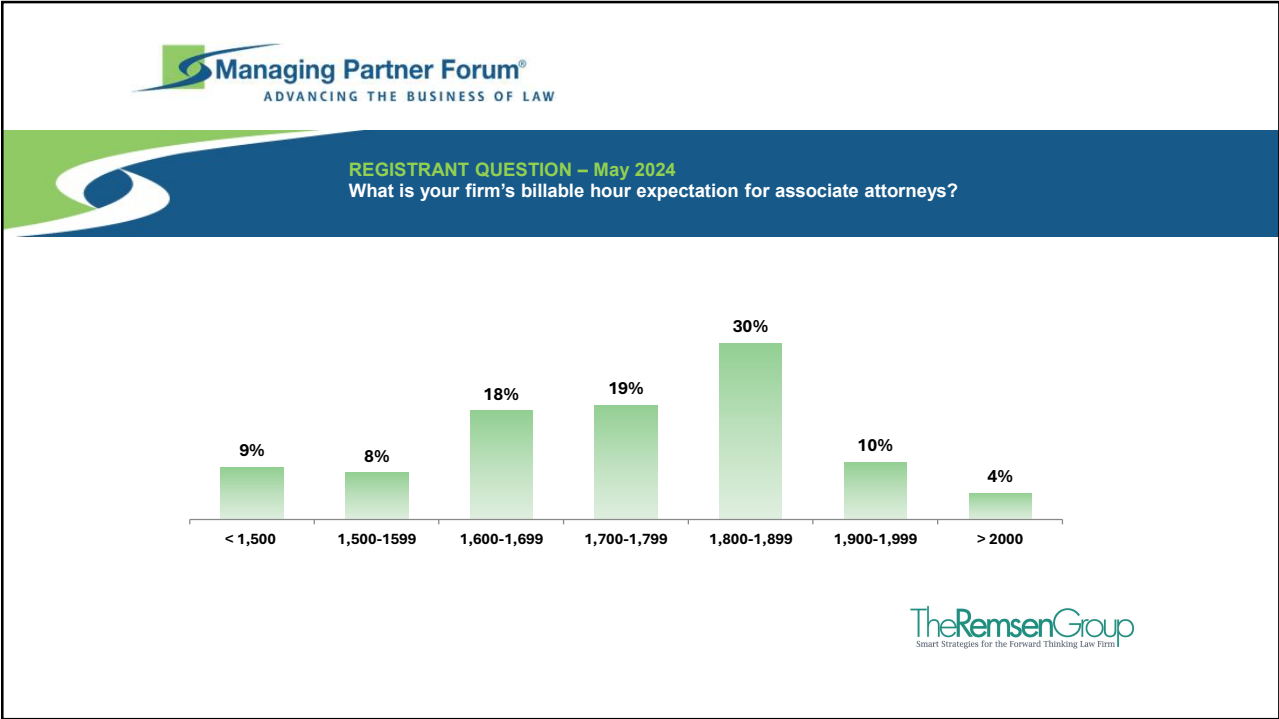
Compensation	39%
Practice Interests	17%
Poor productivity	15%
Poor work quality	5%
Work-life balance	24%

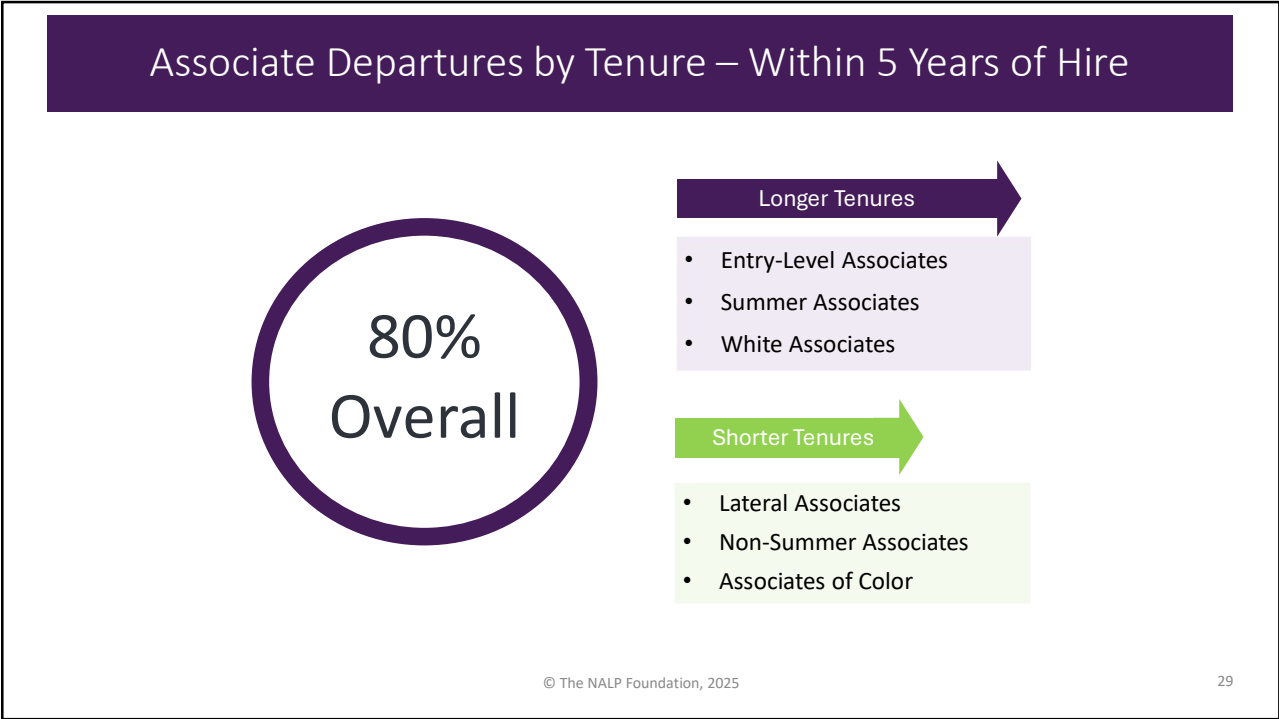
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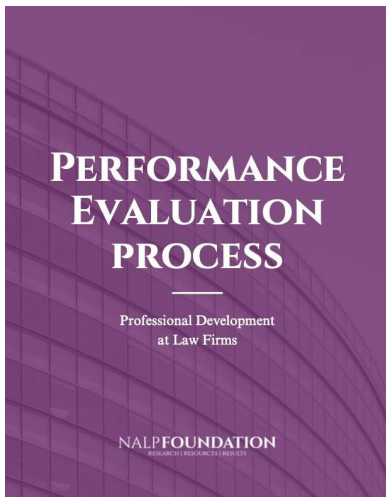


## AUDIENCE POLLING QUESTION

**What is the most effective tactic your firm uses to retain associates?**



## New Study – Join Now!



### TOPICS COVERED:

- Associate performance evaluation content
- Timing (annual, bi-annual, real-time)
- Mechanisms (external vendor/internally developed)
- Differentiation by cohort (seniority, summer associate, other)
- AI usage
- Data utilization (promotion, retention, intervention, other)
- Evaluator and associate training and completion

*Data collection closes August 8, 2025*

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## Customized Reports and Consulting

- Individual Report
- Peer Firm Report
- AmLaw 50, 100 or 200
- Regional
- Individual Firm Presentations

To order a custom report:



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Vice President for Research  
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## MPF GUIDANCE TO FIRM LEADERS

- Use Psychological Assessment Tools
- Invest in an Associate Development Program
- Be as Transparent as Possible
- Tune in to Firm Culture
- Check out NALP Foundation and its Offerings



## REMINDERS

- **The MPF Fall Symposium** – October 7-8, 2025, in Chicago
- Next MPF Webinar – August 20th @ 2:00pm ET
- On-Demand Recording, Handout Materials with Polling Results
- Your Feedback on Today's Session
- Recap by 9Sail



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**Thank You!**

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