

THE LAW FIRM OF THE FUTURE

BIG BOLD **Predictions for 2026**

December 17, 2025

by

Uri Gutfreund

Sr Vice President & Managing Principal - Ames & Gough

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MPF WEBINAR

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Smart Strategies for the Forward Thinking Law Firm

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MPF Webinar Series: The Law Firm of the Future



The MPF Webinar Series: Building the Law Firm of the Future
BIG BOLD Predictions for 2026
An MPF Webinar with **Uri Gutfreund** and **John Remsen, Jr.**
December 17, 2025 – 2:00-3:00pm ET



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Welcome



Uri Gutfreund

Senior Vice President and Managing Principal, Ames & Gough



John Remsen, Jr.

President and CEO, Managing Partner Forum
President, TheRemsenGroup

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UPCOMING PROGRAMS IN 2026

- MPF Webinar Series – Third Wednesday @ 2pm ET
- The MPF 2026 Leadership Conference – May 6-7, 2026, in Atlanta
- The MPF Fall Symposium – October 6-7, 2026, in Chicago
- *The MPF Weekly* – Friday mornings
- MPF Website – www.ManagingPartnerForum.org
- MPF Listserv and Monthly MPF Zoom Calls



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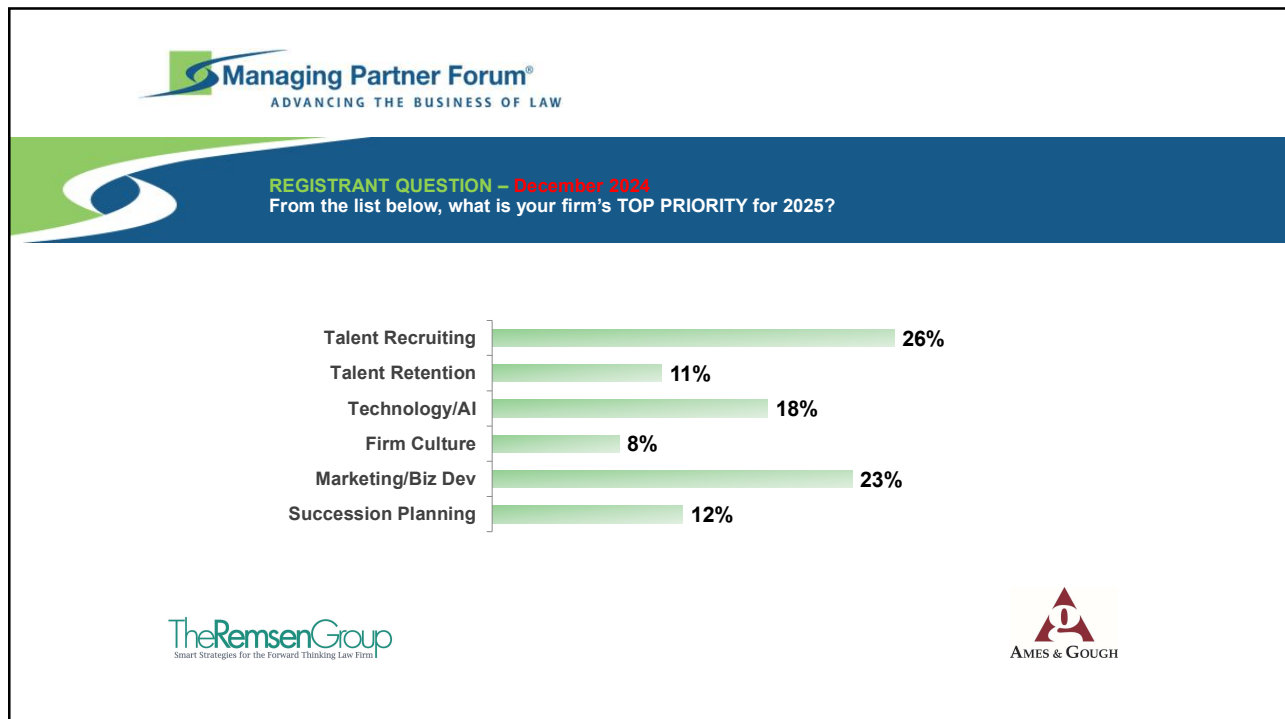
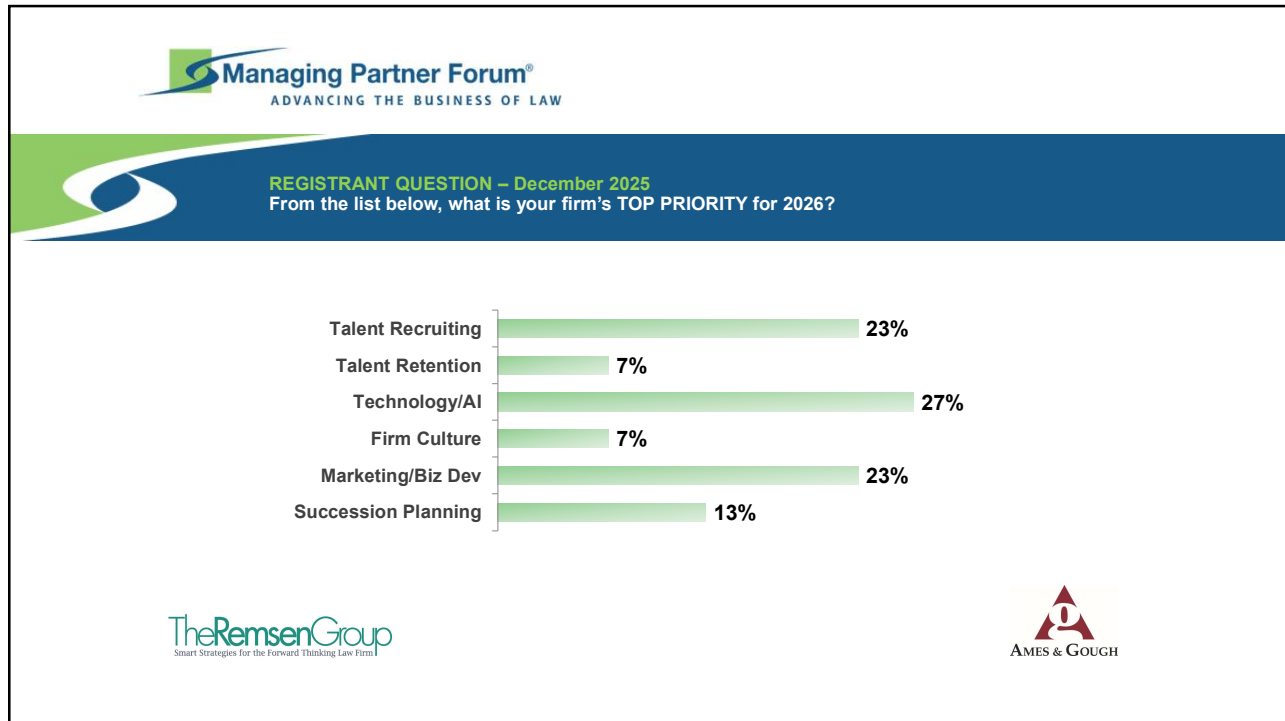


TODAY'S WEBINAR

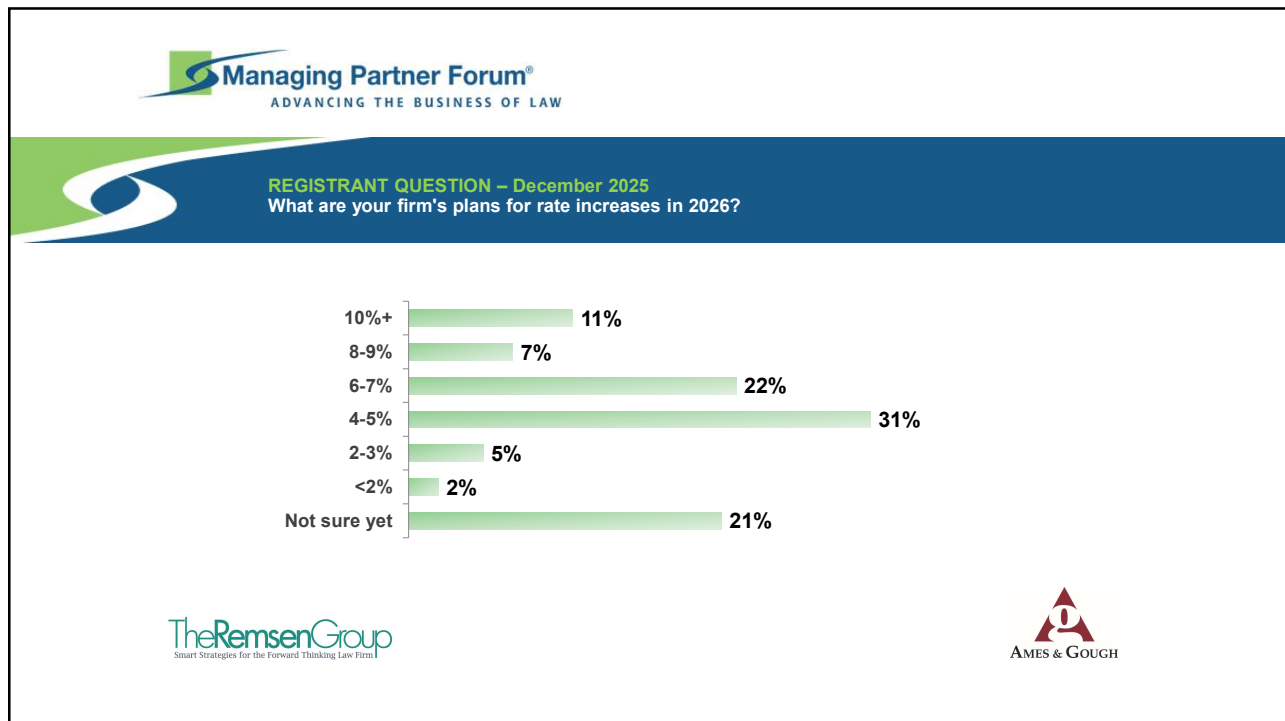
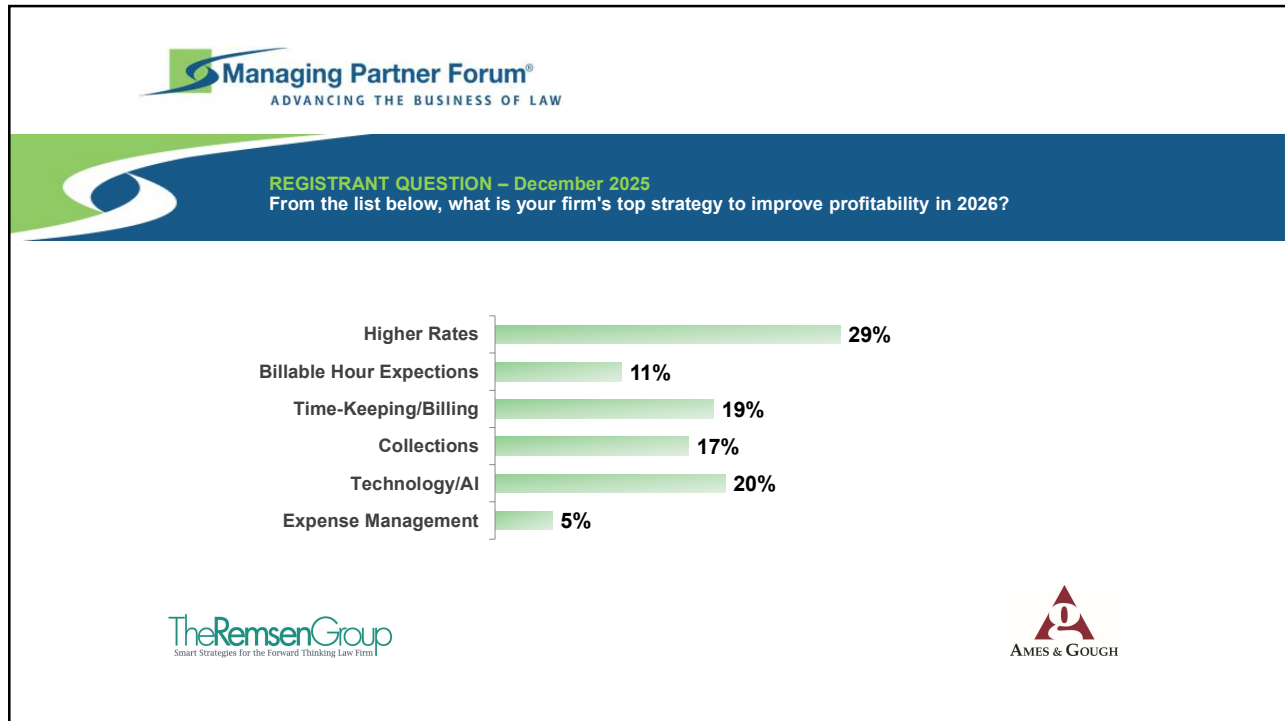
- Today's Topic: **BIG BOLD Predictions for 2026**
- **145** Managing Partners and Law Firm Leaders
- Registrant Survey Results, Audience Polling Questions and Question Box
- On-Demand Recording, Handout Materials, Recap by 9Sail
- Your Feedback on Today's Session



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REGISTRANT QUESTION – December 2024
Your BIG BOLD Predictions for 2025


- 2025 will be "Gangbusters for Business"
- A really good year for mid-sized firms
- Battle to acquire and retain talent
- AI takes more of a tangible leap on the daily workings of a law firm
- AI will mean the end of the billable hour. AFA's will become the new normal.
- Compensation - firms will explore ways to include subjective criteria
- Firm generation gap expands exponentially as seasoned attorneys avoid AI
- Firms who are not properly utilizing tech and AI will be left behind



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REGISTRANT QUESTION – December 2024
Your BIG BOLD Predictions for 2025

- Integration of AI into current operations will initially fall on deaf ears, then see rapid adoption
- Increasing law firm cyber attacks
- Lots of changes with regulatory practices
- Major innovation in closed source AI
- Massive recession, upheaval, unprecedented government incompetency and turmoil
- More law firm mergers
- Staying the course will provide for continued growth and success
- Profit in firms that do commercial firms will increase b/c their will be optimistic about economy




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REGISTRANT QUESTION – December 2024
Your BIG BOLD Predictions for 2025


- Talent will be on the move
- Technology decisions and costs will be critical to the performance, and profitability of many firms
- The billable hour model will be gone by the end of 2025
- Usage of AI turns into a disaster for at least a few firms in the nation
- We will see more return to office policies
- With our most recent election, who knows




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REGISTRANT QUESTION – December 2025
Your BIG BOLD Predictions for 2026

- 2026 will not be as strong as 2025
- AI is NOT the fix all/be all, but rather a tool that requires maturity - like 'Brick Phones' of the early 1980s
- AI tools should start to increase in accuracy, therefore becoming more fundamental to practice
- AI will be the differentiating / key survival factor in all of the business priorities you have listed for 2026...
- AmLaw will slow as clients become more price sensitive releasing non-equity attorneys into the marketplace to help recruiting
- Attorneys who ignore the positive impact that properly utilized technology can have on the practice of law will be left behind




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REGISTRANT QUESTION – December 2025
Your BIG BOLD Predictions for 2026


- Challenge our Practice Groups to implement one alternative billing arrangement (integrating AI)
- Clients will want us to use AI more but will remain unclear about how to compensate for it
- Compensation - firms will continue to explore ways to include subjective criteria in their compensation calculations in a trans
- Consolidation Continues
- Continued law firm mergers, increased unemployment, 2026 may have a rocky start
- Don't have one yet!
- Due to the economy, there will be more work for lawyers




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REGISTRANT QUESTION – December 2025
Your BIG BOLD Predictions for 2026

- Firms that invest in culture and benefits will see large improvements in talent acquisition and retention
- Good year
- Greater divide between AI users & non-users
- Increased firm consolidation in the face of rising firm infrastructure costs
- It's going to be crazy!
- Law firms outperform the broader economy
- Lawsuits based on AI derived work product



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REGISTRANT QUESTION – December 2025
Your BIG BOLD Predictions for 2026


- Macroeconomic headwinds will be biggest factor in profitability
- More AI but hopefully it will become affordable and more reliable
- More lawyers will start to embrace AI's benefits to their practice
- New Compensation Modeling will be critical to recruitment and retention :)
- No bold prediction but I believe 2026 will be a bit of a down year but maybe the talent search will improve
- Open to discussions and would be willing to consider opportunities
- Our mid-sized-firm rate structure will continue to bring us business because we of the value it offers against AmLaw 200




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REGISTRANT QUESTION – December 2025
Your BIG BOLD Predictions for 2026

- Push back on rates
- That AI will slowly but surely infiltrate a wide array of functions within the firm without much upsetting of the apple cart
- That firms will be implementing tech and AI solutions without the necessary strategic direction-setting and firm alignment needed
- That Firms will still be trying to figure out how to effectively utilize AI in their back office and administrative operation.
- The radical impact of AI will become a reality by the end of 2026
- There will be a push from clients for more flat fee arrangements



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REGISTRANT QUESTION – December 2025
Your **BIG BOLD** Predictions for 2026

- There will be increased pressure for law firms to accept fixed/flat rate engagements
- WE are going to reinvent the way law firms operate and provide client results
- We will see law firms shedding attorneys.
- While AI works in legal, overall impression as a useful business tool will be negative slowing expectations on firms to use



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MPF WEBINARS IN 2025 – “BEST OF SHOW”

March
2025 Report on the State of the US Legal Market: Implications for Smaller and Midsized Law Firms
Bill Josten

April
Aligning Tech and Strategy: IT Success Factors for Smaller and Midsize Law Firms
Corey Castillo and Morris Tabush

June
Associate Attrition and Hiring: Insights on Hiring, Attrition, and the Legal Talent Market
with Skip Horne, Jennifer Mandery and Fiona Trevelyan (NALP)




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MPF WEBINARS IN 2025 – “BEST OF SHOW”


September
Content-Fueled Business Development: How Smaller and Midsize Firms Can Compete with BigLaw
John Hellerman and Michael Zukewich

October
Strategies to Improve Profitability in 2026
Rob Mattern, John Beyer and Pierce Campbell

Go to ManagingPartnerForum.org for complete archive



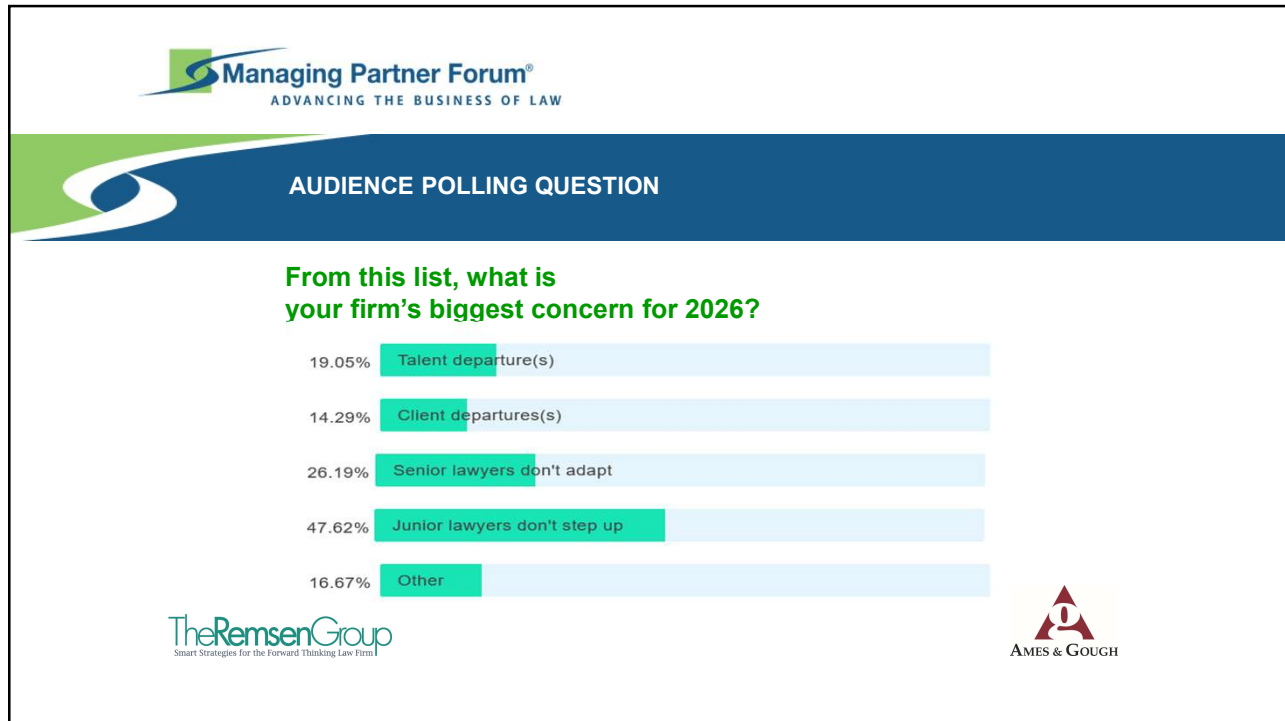
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**Our BIG BOLD
Predictions for 2026**








AI Will Publicly Have a Disastrous Affect for at Least One AMLAW 200 Firm


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AUDIENCE POLLING QUESTION

Has your firm adopted Generative AI usage policies?

Response	Percentage
Yes - with oversight	24.32%
Yes - little oversight	43.24%
Work in process	24.32%
No	8.11%

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**Smart Firms Will Experiment with
New, Value-Based Pricing Models**



Back-to-Office Makes a Comeback




**Decision-Making Will
Become More Data-Driven**



**Competition Will
Become Fiercer than Ever**







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AUDIENCE POLLING QUESTION #4

How do you forecast your firm's performance in 2026?

Forecast	Percentage
Significantly improved	12.5%
Somewhat improved	43.75%
About the same	31.25%
Somewhat down	12.5%

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REMINDERS


- On-Demand Recording, Handout Materials, Recap by 9Sail
- Your Feedback on Today's Session
- **Next MPF Webinar** – January 21, 2026
- **The MPF 2026 Leadership Conference** – May 6-7, 2026, in Atlanta




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