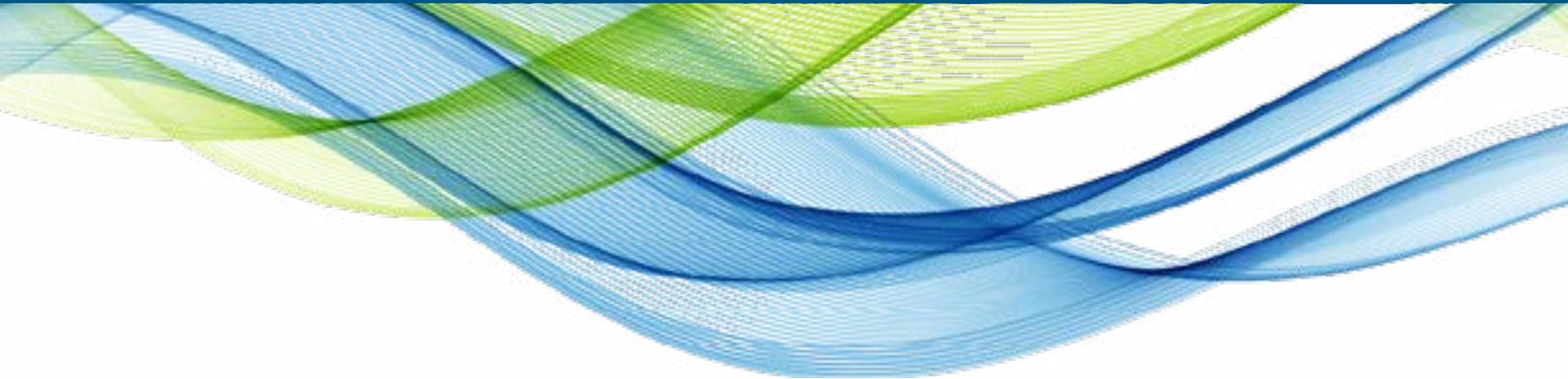




# **Career Progression is Top of Mind for the In-House Bar**

**2018 Evers Legal  
Career Satisfaction Report**



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**Mike Evers**

Evers Legal President

## Introduction

Growth as a professional, taking on additional responsibilities and navigating up the law department ladder are the goals driving in-house counsel—and they are the major factors leading to successful retention of talent, according to findings in the recent Evers Legal Career Satisfaction Survey.

In the second survey of its kind, Evers Legal—a recruiting firm that places lawyers exclusively with corporate law departments—asked 181 in-house counsel at all career levels throughout the U.S. what they valued most and liked least about their jobs. Respondents included general counsel/chief legal officers (20%), deputy general counsel (5%), senior counsel (20%), assistant/associate general counsel (30%), and others at all law department levels, with nearly an equal gender mix (46% male, 54% female). Twenty-six percent of respondents hailed from large legal departments (51+ lawyers) and 36% worked in small legal departments (1-5 lawyers), with 38% falling in the middle.

The survey reinforced findings from the first career satisfaction survey that Evers Legal conducted in 2016. “It’s clear that in-house counsel value several things over compensation—particularly being trusted with additional responsibilities and ascending the legal department ladder,” says Mike Evers, president of Evers Legal. “And our 2018 survey results coupled with our first survey validate these findings.”

## Moving on Up

The most meaningful takeaway from the survey is that career progression is the No. 1 priority for today's in-house counsel.

The top two things respondents said would make their jobs more satisfying were the same things they desired in 2016: promotion (47%) and expanded responsibilities (44%). Conference attendance (74%) and social activities with peers from other companies (52%) ranked highest among respondents when asked which extracurricular activities they enjoy most outside of the office.

“This is not surprising considering the goal of most in-house counsel is rising up within the department or organization,” says Cornell Boggs, former general counsel of several Fortune 500 companies including Dow Corning and MillerCoors. “Networking—both with the internal client and external peers—is very critical to an in-house counsel’s success because it allows them to showcase their skills and talents to a broader audience, potentially leading to new opportunities.”

The 2018 survey also revealed an unexpected result. In the age of advanced technology and an increased desire in the workforce overall for telecommuting opportunities, only 28% of in-house counsel said “a flexible work schedule” would make their jobs more satisfying.

“While it is somewhat surprising that telecommuting has not become more pervasive, it actually supports the main theme of this survey—that career progression is a main goal for in-house counsel,” Evers says. “Respondents understand that working too much from home can be detrimental to one’s desire to move up the law department ladder, and that being in an office and building relationships has high value.”

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### Cornell Boggs

Former GC



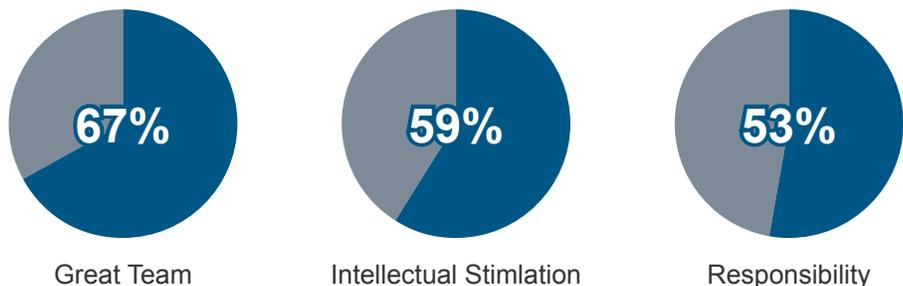
Interestingly, when asked if they actively network, 66% of respondents said “yes”—a 5% uptick since 2016. “This increase in networking speaks to the fact that in-house counsel understand that to advance, they need to get out of their offices and build relationships with both their internal organizational leaders and their peers,” Evers says.

## A Collegial Work Environment Matters

Among other helpful results for companies to consider: 46% of respondents this year said they believed they are appropriately paid, while 53% said they feel underpaid. “The fact that nearly half of respondents are satisfied with their compensation reinforces the point that most in-house lawyers aren’t in it for the money,” Evers says.

In fact, survey respondents said the most rewarding aspects of their jobs were working with a great team (67%), intellectual stimulation (59%) and responsibility (53%). Compensation landed at the bottom at 26%— all of which were similar to the 2016 results.

### Most Rewarding Aspect of Job



Boggs says this makes perfect sense. “What you’re seeing is a reflection of the fact that people choose an in-house career for other reasons,” he explains. “Many times, they have been in high-pressure law firms, and while the pay was good, many other facets of life were difficult to manage. Oftentimes, the switch to an in-house legal department provides lawyers an opportunity to change that snapshot of their life.”

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Former GC

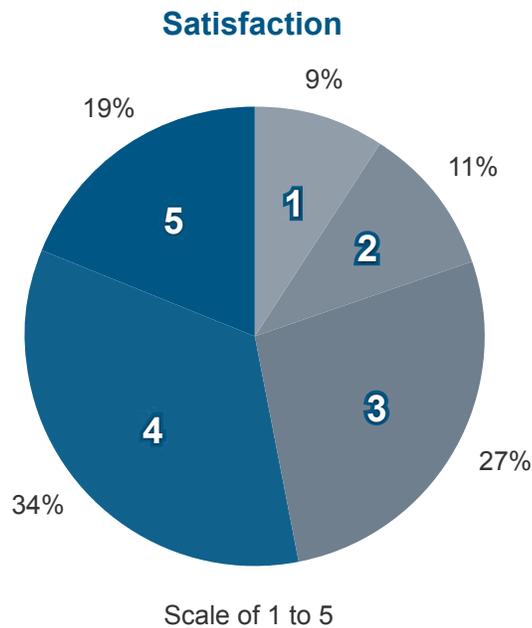
Additionally, the survey found that half of respondents (51% in both 2018 and 2016) cited “stress” as the most challenging aspect of their jobs. “In-house counsel are under pressure and experience significant stress in their work—it’s just a different kind of stress than that of a law firm position,” Evers says. “In-house lawyers can often do a better job balancing work with family life.”

## Steady Satisfaction

Overall, survey respondents rated their career satisfaction level on a scale of 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest) at 3.43, with more than half of respondents (52%) rating it a 4 or 5—which is in line with the 2016 results. Evers partially attributes this high level of satisfaction to the nature of in-house work—serving one client, understanding the business and getting involved in legal matters early on.

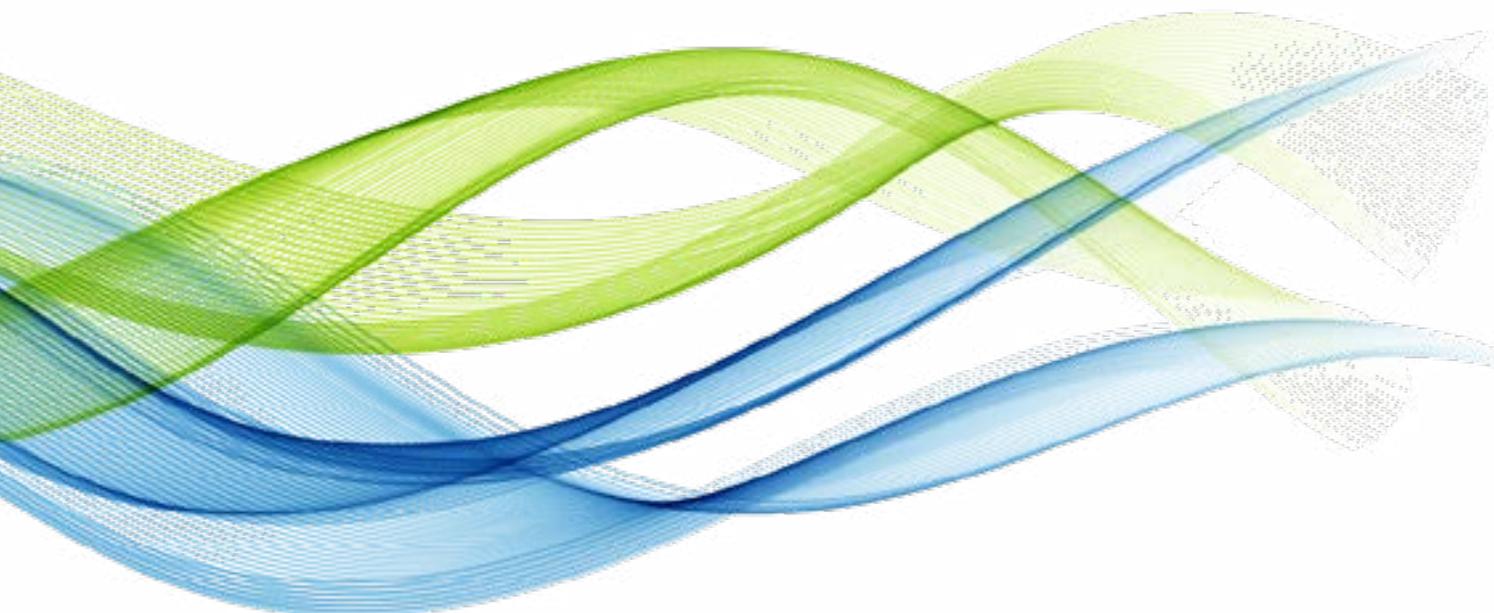
“Once they are in house, the satisfaction level is noticeably higher, so they want to stay.”

**Mike Evers**  
Evers Legal President



“It’s fair to say that in-house counsel like their jobs—and they often join law departments after a less satisfying tenure with a law firm,” Evers says. “Once they are in house, the satisfaction level is noticeably higher, so they want to stay. Career progression then becomes about maximizing that opportunity or moving to another law department, but not going back to a law firm.”

Boggs agrees, and says these results are quite reflective of the current state of the in-house bar. “Many are pleased that we have a profession that is strong, and they see a future in it,” he says. “And by networking with internal clients and external peers, they can open up those opportunities to reach their career advancement goals.”

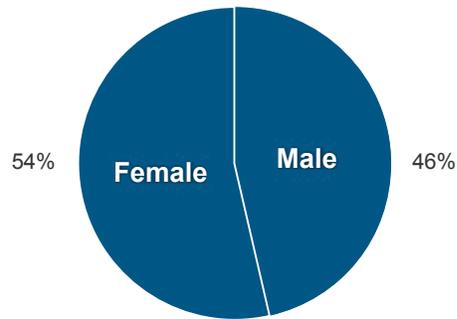


## Full Survey Results

### What is your title?



### Please select your gender?



### How many lawyers are in your legal department?



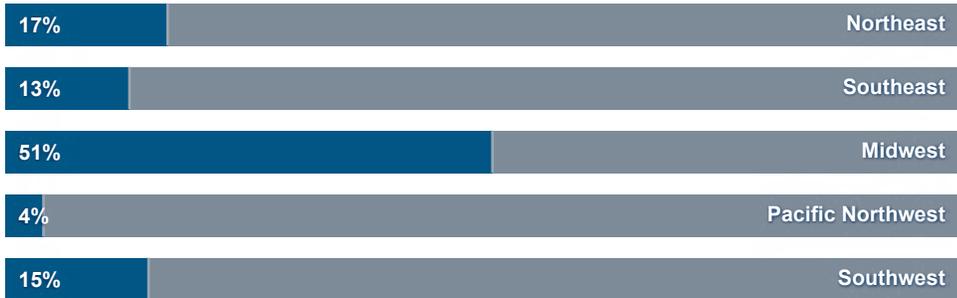
### How many years have you been out of law school?



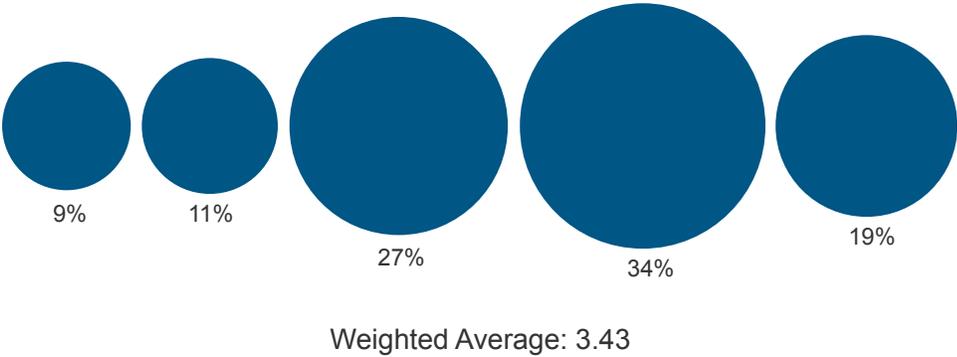
**How long have you worked with your current employer?**



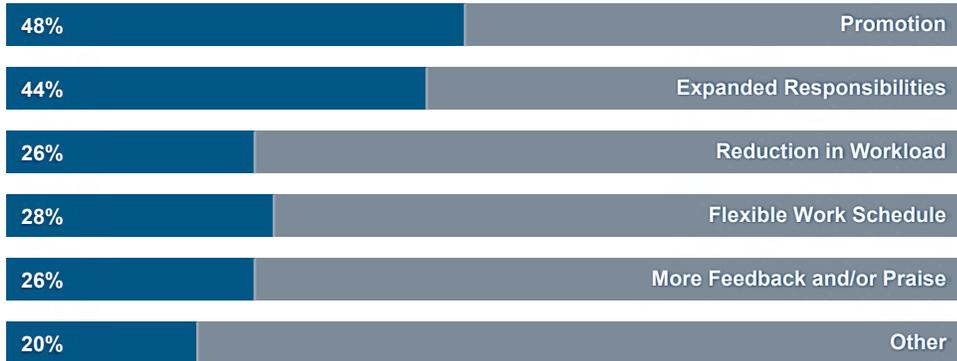
**Where are you located?**



**On a scale of 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest), how satisfied are you with your current job?**



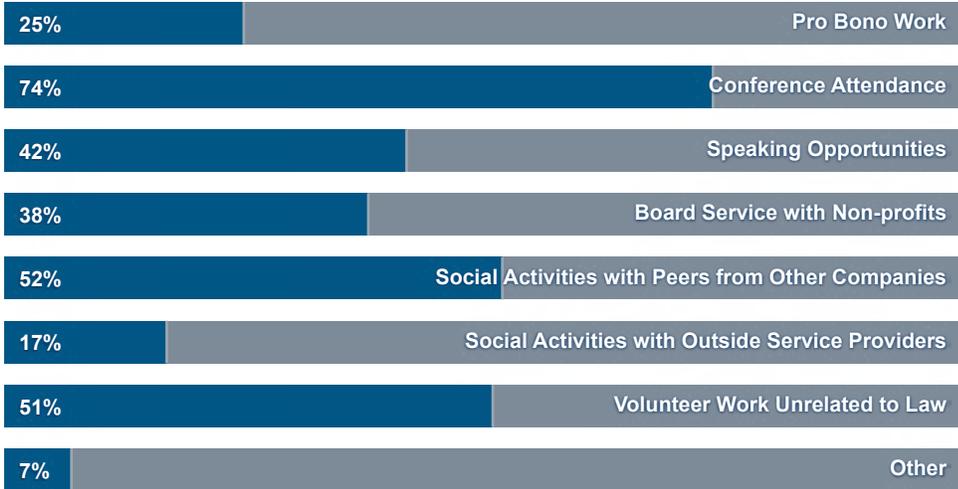
**Other than money, what would make your job more satisfying?**



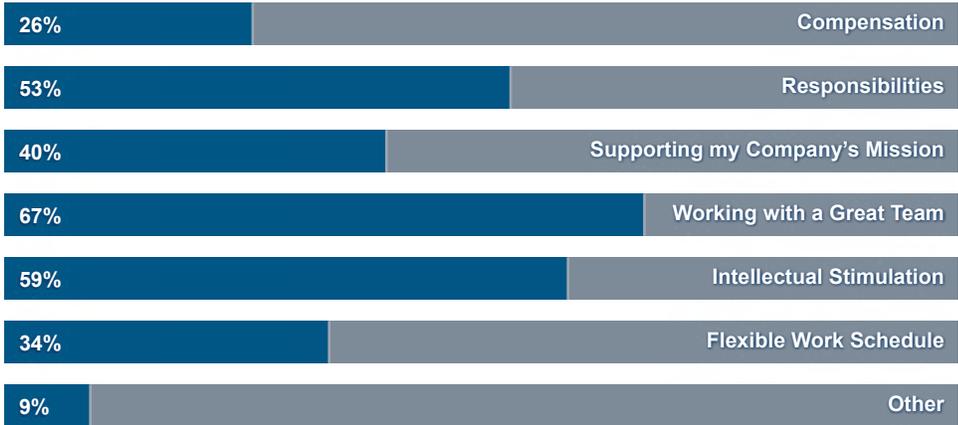
## Do you believe you are:



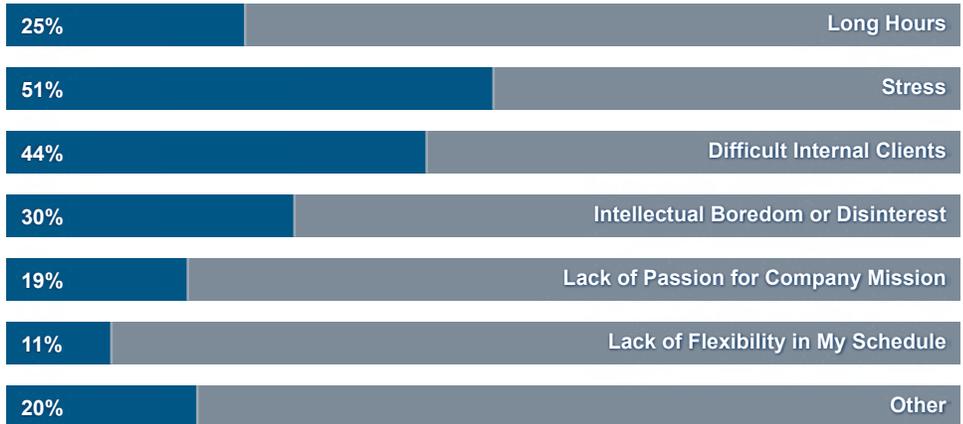
## Which of these extracurricular activities do you enjoy?



## What is the most rewarding aspect of your job?



## What's the most challenging aspect of your job?



## Do you actively network?



Evers Legal has placed more than 300 attorneys into middle and senior level positions with leading companies throughout the country since it was founded in 1997.

**Contact Mike Evers about adding quality talent to your legal department.**

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