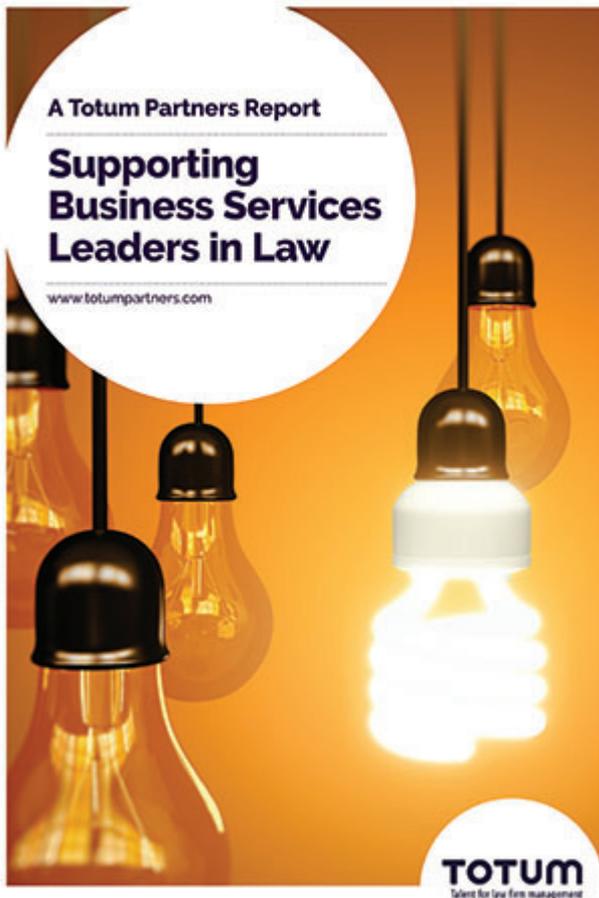


blog post | 19 March 2019

Leadership report: Supporting business services leaders in law

Recruiting a strong business services leadership team in law has never been more challenging or vital. That is why our founding directors Tim Skipper, Gary Jones and Deborah Gray have written a paper sharing their insights and guidance from their years spent in this critical area of law firm recruitment.

Leadership report



Recruiting the right business services leaders in law is far from easy. There are unique challenges to recruiting COOs, CEOs, CFOs and director or 'head of' level business roles. From our perspective, the best outcomes are the product of a deep understanding of the firm and the market pressures it faces, combined with the broader experience to know how firms can, and do, make the most of their leadership investment.

In this paper, which is available in PDF form (see below) and which we summarise here, we share our experiences of working for many years in senior business services recruitment and provide our

recommendations to help you successfully recruit your business services leaders.

The growing challenge

We recently conducted research, 'Recruitment trends in law firm business services', which analysed data covering all legal business services job vacancies advertised between 2015 to 2018. Findings show that business services roles across all functions have increased: they now account for over 15% of law firm vacancies.

This growth has put more demand on those heading up these functions. Not only do they have significant responsibility to support the development of their own teams, but they also have to work hard to integrate them effectively into other functions across the firm so that they can collectively deliver against overall strategic objectives.

This has consequently pushed functional business leaders up the seniority chain – often to board level – an effect further accelerated by their success in improving operations and strategic thinking, as well as areas like brand, reputation, client relationships and pricing mechanisms.

Further research we conducted looking specifically at leadership placements since 2015 to 2018 found that:

1. The number of Totum's leadership placements has increased over the past three years, and many of them are now at board level: of the top-50 UK firms, half now have a Chief Operating Officer (COO) or equivalent.
2. Leadership roles from 2015 to 2018 split (on average) as follows: Director (45%), Head of (28%), COO/CEO/CFO type roles (20%), and other (7%). It is striking that COO/CEO roles now form nearly a quarter of Totum's leadership work. These roles did not even exist in many firms just 10 years ago.
3. Nearly half of the candidates shortlisted by Totum are now women, and an equal balance of men and women are now getting placed in leadership roles too.
4. More leadership candidates come from other sectors. Nearly half (49%) of shortlisted candidates now come from other professional sectors or beyond – and nearly a third of leadership placements are with candidates from outside of law.

Factors for success

These statistics and trends highlight a critical point in business leadership recruitment: firms must take a more creative and diverse view of the talent pool to successfully fill these vital roles. Embracing female talent, as well as new capabilities that other sectors can offer, is an increasingly common feature of leadership recruitment in the legal sector.

Other steps include thinking more strategically, planning ahead, taking a cross-functional perspective, and, for firms that want to benefit from new business skills and capabilities, thinking differently about what kind of talent can best deliver your firm's business objectives.

If you would like to receive a PDF of the full report 'Supporting business services leaders in law', which includes many more recommendations on leadership recruitment based on Totum's best-practice expertise, please contact Sarah.Broad@TotumPartners.com [1]

Share this page:

- [Twitter](#) [2]
- [Linkedin](#) [3]
- [Facebook](#) [4]

[Top](#)

- [Privacy and Cookies](#)
 - [Refer a Friend](#)
 - [Sitemap](#)
-

Source URL: <https://www.totumpartners.com/insights/leadership-report-supporting-business-services-leaders-law>

Links

[1] <http://Sarah.Broad@TotumPartners.com>

[2] <https://twitter.com/home?status=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.totumpartners.com%2Fprintpdf%2F2177>

[3]

<https://www.linkedin.com/shareArticle?mini=true&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.totumpartners.com%2Fprintpdf%2F2177>

[4]

<https://www.facebook.com/sharer/sharer.php?u=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.totumpartners.com%2Fprintpdf%2F2177>