Corporate Legal Operations Compensation Survey

April 20, 2022
Introduction

We’re in the midst of the most significant changes to employment in a generation, fueled by remote work, the Great Resignation, and an increased focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion. At the same time, the legal operations profession is exploding.

Brightflag and Legal Operators partnered on this survey to help legal operations professionals, General Counsel, and HR leaders to better understand fair market compensation for this critical function.

Kevin Cohn, Brightflag

Colin McCarthy, Legal Operators
About this survey
Methodology

● 17 questions, all required
  ○ “Prefer not to say” option for questions about gender and ethnicity

● Conducted using SurveyMonkey

● Entirely anonymous

● Ran from January 24, 2022, to February 28, 2022
Responses

- 241 qualified respondents after excluding 22:
  - 14 on the basis they self-identified as not being in corporate legal operations
  - 8 based on the authors’ judgment
    - $28 Legal Operations Specialist, $12,700 General Counsel, etc.

- 95% of people who started the survey completed it in an average of 2 minutes and 43 seconds
Disclaimers

- Participants self-selected, so are not a statistical sample
  - Although insightful and valuable, the survey results are not necessarily representative of corporate legal operations generally

- Participation was anonymous and self-reported
  - Not possible to verify accuracy of the data

- The survey results capture a moment in time; the job market and compensation continue to change rapidly
  - Russian invasion of Ukraine
  - Volatile equity markets
  - Historically high inflation
Demographics
Work location

- 13 countries and 33 US states/districts represented
- Respondents overwhelmingly in the United States (82%)
- Plurality of respondents in California (26% of total)
Department size

- Half of respondents work in departments of 50 or fewer people
- 21% of respondents work in departments of under 10 people
- No correlation between experience and department size
Bar admittance

- Globally, only 15% of respondents admitted to practice law

- Considerable regional variance:
  - US: 11%
  - UK: 31%
  - Elsewhere: 45%
Experience

- Respondents represent a range of experience levels
- Skews more experienced: 63% have 1+ decade in total
- 30 individual respondents have 2+ decades of legal experience
Reporting line

- 62% of respondents are the most senior legal ops in their department
- Within that 62% of respondents, 72% report to the CLO/GC
People management

- 54% of respondents have people management responsibility
- 98% of people managers have 5+ years of experience
- 79% of people managers have between 1–5 direct reports
Diversity

- 99% of respondents answered at least one diversity question
- 78% of respondents are diverse (not male or not white)
- 28% of respondents are not male and not white
Compensation
Job titles have effectively no correlation with compensation

- Even after normalizing more than 50 unique titles to Manager/Director/VP equivalent

- Inconsistent “level” even for the most senior legal ops person in a department: ranges from Legal Operations Manager to Chief of Staff and everything in between
Being the most senior legal ops is highly correlated with compensation

- For the most senior legal ops person in a department, compensation is highly correlated with legal department size.

- For all other legal ops roles, compensation is highly correlated with total years of professional experience.

- In this report, “the most senior legal ops person in a department” is referred to as the “head of legal ops.”
Most respondents receive a cash bonus

- Heads of legal ops:
  - 67% receive a cash bonus
  - Averages 21% of base salary

- Other legal ops roles:
  - 71% receive a cash bonus
  - Averages 14% of base salary
About half of respondents receive equity

- Heads of legal ops:
  - 54% receive equity
  - Annualized grant value averages 21% of base salary

- Other legal ops roles:
  - 53% receive equity
  - Annualized grant value averages 18% of base salary

- Survey instructed respondents to enter the value of their equity at the time the grant was made
Significant gender pay gap for heads of legal ops, but not for other legal ops roles

Table shows total compensation (base + bonus + equity) earned by gender-diverse (i.e., female or non-binary) respondents for every $1.00 earned by male respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Heads of legal ops</th>
<th>Other legal ops roles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>$0.78</td>
<td>$1.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLD &lt;10</td>
<td>$1.03</td>
<td>Exp &lt;5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLD 10–50</td>
<td>$0.69</td>
<td>Exp 5–10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLD 51–100</td>
<td>$0.89</td>
<td>Exp 11–20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLD &gt;100</td>
<td>$0.78</td>
<td>Exp &gt;20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key: CLD = corporate legal department size; exp = total years of professional experience
Ethnicity not meaningfully correlated with compensation

Table shows total compensation (base + bonus + equity) earned by non-white respondents for every $1.00 earned by white respondents

**Key:** CLD = corporate legal department size; exp = total years of professional experience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Heads of legal ops</th>
<th>Other legal ops roles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Overall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLD &lt;10</td>
<td>$1.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLD 10–50</td>
<td>$0.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLD 51–100</td>
<td>$1.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLD &gt;100</td>
<td>$1.51</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
$1.29

Total compensation (base + bonus + equity) earned by respondents admitted to practice law for every $1.00 earned by respondents not admitted to practice law.
64% of respondents say their company bases compensation on where employees are located.
The ten highest-compensated respondents are mostly diverse heads of legal ops of large CLDs working in California

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total experience</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Role</th>
<th>CLD size</th>
<th>Total cash (USD)</th>
<th>Total comp (USD)</th>
<th>Diverse</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11–20 years</td>
<td>US (not CA)</td>
<td>Head of legal ops</td>
<td>51–100 people</td>
<td>$575,000</td>
<td>$775,000</td>
<td>Gender, ethnicity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;20 years</td>
<td>California</td>
<td>Other legal ops</td>
<td>&gt;100 people</td>
<td>$399,510</td>
<td>$474,510</td>
<td>Gender, ethnicity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;20 years</td>
<td>California</td>
<td>Head of legal ops</td>
<td>&gt;100 people</td>
<td>$360,000</td>
<td>$460,000</td>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;20 years</td>
<td>California</td>
<td>Head of legal ops</td>
<td>&gt;100 people</td>
<td>$355,000</td>
<td>$455,000</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5–10 years</td>
<td>California</td>
<td>Other legal ops</td>
<td>&gt;100 people</td>
<td>$331,000</td>
<td>$443,000</td>
<td>Gender, ethnicity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;20 years</td>
<td>California</td>
<td>Head of legal ops</td>
<td>51–100 people</td>
<td>$367,000</td>
<td>$432,000</td>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
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<tr>
<td>&gt;20 years</td>
<td>Outside US</td>
<td>Head of legal ops</td>
<td>&gt;100 people</td>
<td>$400,000</td>
<td>$400,000</td>
<td>No</td>
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<tr>
<td>11–20 years</td>
<td>US (not CA)</td>
<td>Head of legal ops</td>
<td>&lt;10 people</td>
<td>$385,000</td>
<td>$385,000</td>
<td>Gender</td>
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<tr>
<td>5–10 years</td>
<td>US (not CA)</td>
<td>Head of legal ops</td>
<td>&gt;100 people</td>
<td>$305,000</td>
<td>$385,000</td>
<td>Gender</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11–20 years</td>
<td>California</td>
<td>Head of legal ops</td>
<td>11–50 people</td>
<td>$264,000</td>
<td>$374,000</td>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
About the authors
● 16 years in executive management at high-growth tech companies

● Responsible for corporate legal in previous two companies

● B.S. in Statistics from Carnegie Mellon University

Kevin Cohn
Chief Customer Officer
• Founder of Legal Operators and passionate community builder

• Advisor to and investor in numerous legal tech companies

• Previously at Twitter, Rubrik, GlobalFoundries, and Sonos

Colin McCarthy
Founder & CEO
About Brightflag

The Brightflag Legal Operations Platform is where corporate legal departments gain visibility into operations, maximize productivity, and engage with outside counsel strategically. Brightflag is a recognized leader in artificial intelligence and machine learning and has invested more than 100,000 hours in the development of its patented solution. The company serves a global community of legal professionals from offices in California, New York, Ireland, and Australia.

For more information, visit: https://brightflag.com
About Legal Operators

Legal Operators connects legal operations professionals globally with their peers and industry experts, educating you on key topics through content and collaboration so that you are empowered to execute with sound, tested solutions.

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