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[ANALYSIS](#)

## Mid-Market Trendspotter: Hybrid-Friendly Law Firms Are Seeing an Influx of Talent

Hybrid work and a better work-life balance are luring more candidates to midsize firms, as Big Law becomes more stringent with return-to-work policies

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Flexible Working



Jessie Yount

### The Trend:

For the growth-minded, there's been no better time in the past two years than now to double down on hiring. Big Law's golden handcuffs are coming off, and talent is more accessible and more available, and often at a more reasonable price point. Midsize firms are luring talent with a simple yet effective differentiator: hybrid work.

### The Driver:

In the past few years, the candidate's market allowed attorneys to move significantly upmarket to larger firms with bigger compensation packages, often with remote work. But demand has fallen, and the talent war has cooled in Big Law. Firms are back in the driver's seat with [leverage](#) to dictate work arrangements and crackdown on in-office [mandates](#).

Meanwhile, midsize firms are in an [enviable](#) position with increased demand in the first half of 2022, more cost-conscious rates, and a better talent-retention track record. On top of that, midsize firms tend to shy away from trend-hiring in favor of being right-sized or staffed with well-rounded talent that can be retooled as needed.

All said, the current environment gives midsize firms an opportunity to do what they do best: offer something different.

### The Buzz:

"We are seeing so many Big Law firms forcing people back to the office, forcing people back into suits and ties," said [Tressler](#) chief marketing officer Anna Hanson.

Hanson, along with Tressler partner and executive committee member Mark Banovetz, told me in an interview last month that the firm's remote capabilities have enhanced its growth plans. In fact, it was part of the draw for the six attorneys and three staff members that joined Tressler from Orange County, California-based [Wade & Lowe](#) last month.

Remote recruiting is underpinned by the firm's investment in moving to a cloud-based environment, Banovetz explained, which allows the firm to reach, onboard and train talent remotely.

"That's a big reason why we're seeing an influx in hiring because we're young, we're modern and we have the technology to do it," said Hanson.

It's been a similar story for plaintiff-side firm [Sanford Heisler Sharp](#).

"It's not impossible to recruit demanding in-office work, but it is a big selling point for firms to be more flexible," said Sanford Heisler Sharp chairman David Sanford.

Sanford said in an interview last week on the firm's launch in [Silicon Valley](#), that every candidate wants to know about the firm's approach to the office and what the future holds. (It's asking for two days a week in the office for the foreseeable future.)

"And every candidate wants a hybrid environment," Sanford added, noting that though finding a balance has been difficult, flexibility has allowed the firm to hire 16 attorneys this year alone.

Several Florida-based midsize firms are also benefiting from remote infrastructure.

"My main reason for coming over was the ability to work from home or from the office, which is a great benefit when I have a 90-minute drive in traffic," said [Haber Law](#) senior associate Jeremy Apisdorf, who recently arrived from a community association boutique that was preparing to return to a 100% attendance policy.

Apisdorf is one of seven lawyers who've joined Haber Law in the past five months. And several of them [told](#) my colleague Dan Roe that flexible work was a major draw, as a time saver and enabler of a better work-life balance.

Construction litigator Daniel Jovanov, of Haber Law, echoed his colleague: "As far as why I came, it was the unique office setting. I have three little kids, and having the flexibility to be at the house and avoid that hour drive to the office is so valuable."

Marie Tomassi, president and managing shareholder of Florida-based [Trenam Law](#), said in a recent [Q&A](#) that the firm has taken several steps to become more flexible. For instance, it implemented actual flexible scheduling policies and equipment along with workarounds "so people can literally work from anywhere in the world that has connectivity."

Tomassi said these upgrades have helped the firm hire from a wider talent pool, but also create "a more seamless client experience" that stems from an improvement in attorneys' lives and work-life balance.

That idea—that the benefit of embracing hybrid work is not simply expanding a firm's talent pool, but also improving its service and coverage for clients—is also something that's been driven home in my recent conversations with firm leaders.

Banovetz, of Tressler, believes remote hiring is positioning the firm for success as the practice of law becomes more nationalized.

"We get a lot of work these days because people go on our website and see where we have lawyers that are licensed," Banovetz explained.

"The other day I had a client call me [with a] coverage case in Florida," he said. "They said 'I see you have an associate in Florida, and I really want you to help me, but I also want you to have somebody in Florida.'"

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