

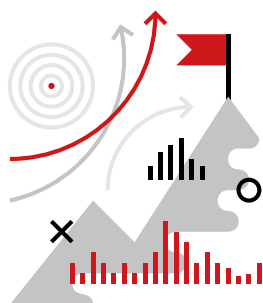
# Briefing Leaders

MARKETING IN  
MOTION

Who's leading BD and marketing functions, how diverse are they, and is legal finally drawing more M/BD leaders from beyond its own world?

APRIL 2019

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT  
AND MARKETING LEADERS  
2019



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This series of **Briefing** Leaders research pieces will find out exactly who is leading your business services functions into 2020, and what that may 'say' about evolving law firm strategy. This report covers marketing and business development (MBD) leaders at 124 firms, with revenues ranging from £19m to £1.79bn. Which specific role titles are on the rise and why, where are the new leaders coming from and, importantly, how are firms doing when it comes to business leadership diversity?

In marketing and business development (MBD), the number of C-level titles over the last five years has remained flat (4%) – with 'director' titles decreasing 2% and 'head of' titles increasing 4% compared to 2013. This is different from other business services areas, where 'heads of' IT, for example, have dramatically fallen since our previous Leaders research, and where C-level titles have seen more significant increases.

But there are more 'separated' job titles – now 134 distinct roles in 124 firms. There has been more separation of 'marketing' and 'business development' as functions, with nine opting for two or more 'top' leaders for these two (or more) disciplines. The most common title still includes both words together; however, titles with only one or the other still make up almost half. And a surprisingly high 7% of firms have relevant titles that include neither word.

There has also been an increase in the number of women leaders, but this is more significant among firms on lower revenues. The 'gender gap' has widened slightly, with 58% of top legal MBD professionals now women, compared to 55% in 2013. A more striking difference is the shift from a relatively equal share across all revenue bands to more variation between the largest and smallest firms. For example, the £20–50m band contain many more women BD leaders, and the £200m–£600m band has more men. Overall, however, there is still a more even split than in most other business services functions.

The amount of 'in hiring' (recruiting from other law firms) also remains similar to 2013. The majority of leaders (55%) still come from other law firms. The biggest 'other' groups of newcomers are now media and consultancy. Almost a fifth (19%) of leaders come from another professional services or a financial services firm, but there is little change in the sectors from which top legal MBD professionals are being hired. The 'mobility explosion' predicted in 2013 has occurred, however, with 20 leader moves in 2017 and a further 15 in 2018. ▲

## BRIEFING PEOPLE



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01

# Leaders up to C-level? Little sign of change



**W**hen we first conducted this research into business services ‘top jobs’ in 2013, there was a difference of opinion as to whether the landscape was likely to see an increase in C-level titles in the following five years. Depending on your stance, it may or may not be surprising to learn that C-level top titles have remained flat at 4% (although 24 more firms were included in our research this year). In other areas we have looked at – IT for example – there has been more significant growth in C-level titles. It might be concluded from this that top marketing and business development (MBD) professionals are not being utilised as well as they could be, especially as they can effect change and improvement on a large scale. However, this may also be perceived as more of a ‘red herring’, depending on how much influence the top MBD person holds in board meetings (if they are on the board at all). Also, 50% of these C-level leaders are working at the top-10 firms. This may reflect increased understanding in these firms of the importance of MBD for a successful business, or simply the greater tendency to give the top-level person in each area a C-level title.

On the other hand, a quarter of our firms are still holding on to ‘head of’ titles for MBD – which again contrasts with IT leaders, who rarely have this title now. In fact, there is a slight increase in this specific title (4%) on 2013. It’s noteworthy, however, that most of these titles are held in the £20m–£100m bands, with very few past this point, so there is some correlation between firm revenue and typical title. Director titles have decreased a little, seemingly replaced by ‘other’ titles, including a few more ‘managers’ than previously. Overall, things have not changed that significantly in the five years since our previous research, but does this mean anything at all for the future of such roles?

Ben Middleton, business development director at Addleshaw Goddard, says: “There can be at least a sense of greater importance – perhaps of executive-based endorsement. However, I don’t believe that the ability to fulfil the role – delivering the right level of support for the partners to best serve clients – is necessarily helped or hindered by the letter C in your title.”

Moreover, Richard Grove, director of marketing and BD at Allen & Overy, says the distinction isn’t worth measuring, even for the largest firms like his. “The problem is that there is no global standard; it depends where you are in the world. For example, I am a global director, with a role on the executive committee, who has a chief marketing officer reporting to me. There are also multiple examples of CMOs in other firms who report in to COOs, and who are given little influence at board or executive committee level. Neither of these is right or wrong – they’re just different.”

## CHALLENGE TO DUAL? GREATER DIVISION OF MARKETING AND BD

In terms of what the job titles ‘mean’, there is a fairly even split between roles that are ‘pure’ marketing or business development on their own (if the words are an accurate indicator of the work). Almost half of all roles (49%) are combined in some way, either as ‘MBD’ or one of these combined with something else (with ‘clients’ or ‘talent’ for example). More people are also involved in the research this year, as nine firms have since split the leader’s role into two distinct areas (and in one case, three separate areas – two concerning business development and one marketing). Only one firm had an arrangement like this in 2013. Interestingly, not all these firms have the same title level for each category, with some opting for both a director and a

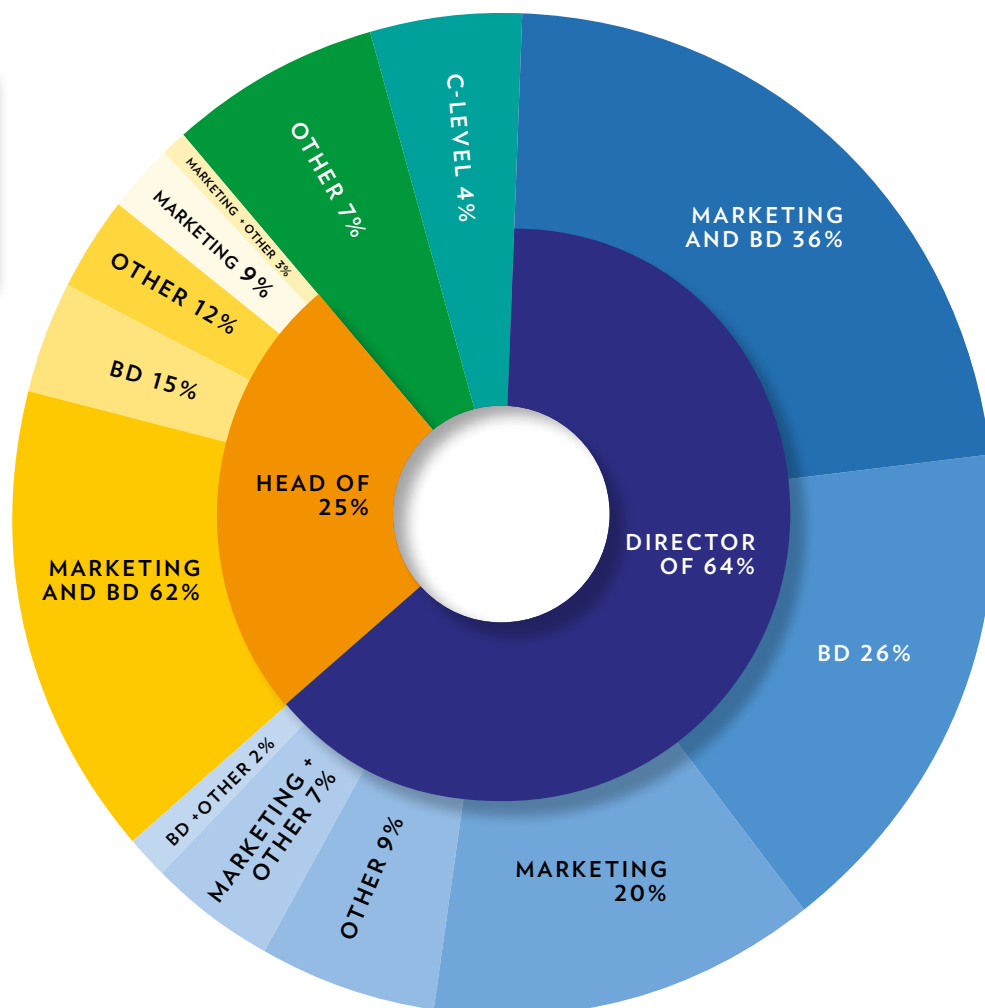
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WHAT'S  
YOUR JOB  
TITLE?



'head of' – presumably a sign, in some way at least, of strategic significance.

Louise Edwards, marketing director at Michelmores (and formerly a practising lawyer), says: "I'm responsible for both the marketing and BD strategy for the firm, but we have three distinct teams: BD, communications and client service. We all work in an open-plan office, and collaborate a lot across the teams and offices on both campaigns and firm-wide initiatives."

And Middleton at Addleshaw Goddard highlights that the changing demands on the function may be driving the growing trend of splitting the top job in two. "Capability in digital platforms is both a growing and a fast-changing skillset, and I'd say you really need somebody leading marketing who understands both the technology and the audience to build the right conversations. That might be very difficult for a head of business development, whose track record will have focused most on helping the business to grow."

He adds: "There can also be a more general

disconnect in firms between the perception of BD and the reality of what it can offer. We've made it a priority to unlock that, and package some aspects of our work differently for the partners, which in turn is driving a change in internal appreciation."

Charlotte Eberlein, head of marketing and business development at Thomson Snell & Passmore, adds: "Credibility grows alongside the ability to show that you really do affect the bottom line, help the firm to grow existing clients and to win new ones."

Meanwhile, there are 7% of top titles with neither the words marketing (or 'market') nor business development included, instead preferring, for example, head of client relationships, director of clients and strategic development, and even one COO responsible. It's perhaps surprising that there are quite so many titles at the top of the MBD tree without one or other of the words mentioned, but rather combining them, or even including them as part of a different role.

Elliot Moss, at Mishcon de Reya, one of the first

## DOES YOUR TITLE CONTAIN BD, MARKETING OR BOTH?

### 43% MARKETING AND BD



### 25% PURE MARKETING



### 25% PURE BD



### 7% OTHER



directors from business development to become a partner in a large law firm says: "Job titles do not tell the full story: the most critical factor is having authority, and the management of a firm understanding what you can do as a leader in your field."

Ultimately, adds Grove at A&O: "Either you have separate sub functions that are highly collaborative and in sync with each other, or you create a single function that plans and delivers as integrated sub functions. Both can work, but I've had more success with the latter.

"If they are separated, you run the risk of separate silos, or worse: separate empires of disconnected activities. In many cases, the highest impact each of these functions can deliver is through a combined effort that brings together content across multiple channels to all of the defined audiences.

"In many cases, the highest impact each of these functions can deliver is through a combined effort that brings together content across multiple channels to all of the defined audiences." ▴

## PARTNER COMMENT

Dave Harris, client solutions director at OnePlace, says the latest top legal business titles show law firms waking up to the changing demands of business development

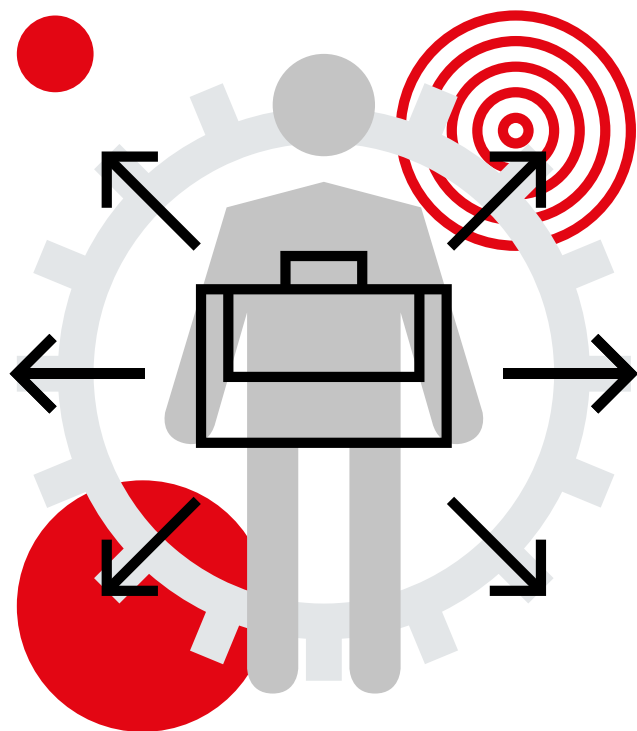


It's of great interest to me that the research so closely reflects the conversations we have with our clients and prospects. Marketing and business development should of course be treated as fundamentally different in terms of both purpose and skillset, and it would appear that law firms are now waking up to this.

In my view, the separation of business development and marketing roles will only increase as firms look to further align themselves with the more commercial client relationship approach found outside the legal sector. This evolution will promote focus on a client journey and lifecycle and bring a much-needed deeper understanding of client needs.

From a technology standpoint, we are seeing a continued and growing demand for advanced capabilities, far beyond the traditional CRM functionality concerned with lists and contact management. This is clearly a direct result of the changes described here. The rise of the business development professional has increased demand for pipeline and opportunity-management tools, and a new focus on client development and relationship roles creates a demand for technology to support this new and refreshing mentality. Of course, size of firm and specialism will play a part in defining these roles, but fundamentally, innovative and client-focused use of technology – in support of areas such as experience management, expertise management and client feedback – will be critical if firms want to achieve their commercial growth goals and objectives.

**A new focus on client development and relationship roles creates a demand for technology to support this new and refreshing mentality**



02

## Mobility on the move – but most arrivals still from law firms

**I**n the years leading up to the 2013 report on this subject, job mobility had been affected by the recession and was therefore slow.

We then speculated why this was – people were staying in the same roles for greater security in an uncertain economic environment. The start of the decade had already seen a shift away from this trend in marketing, and there was an explosion of movement, with 27 in the first three years alone. We predicted then that there would be 83 moves in the 2010s and firms have already exceeded that at 89. There have been 53 moves since 2015, and mobility was especially high in 2017, with 20 moves across the top firms.

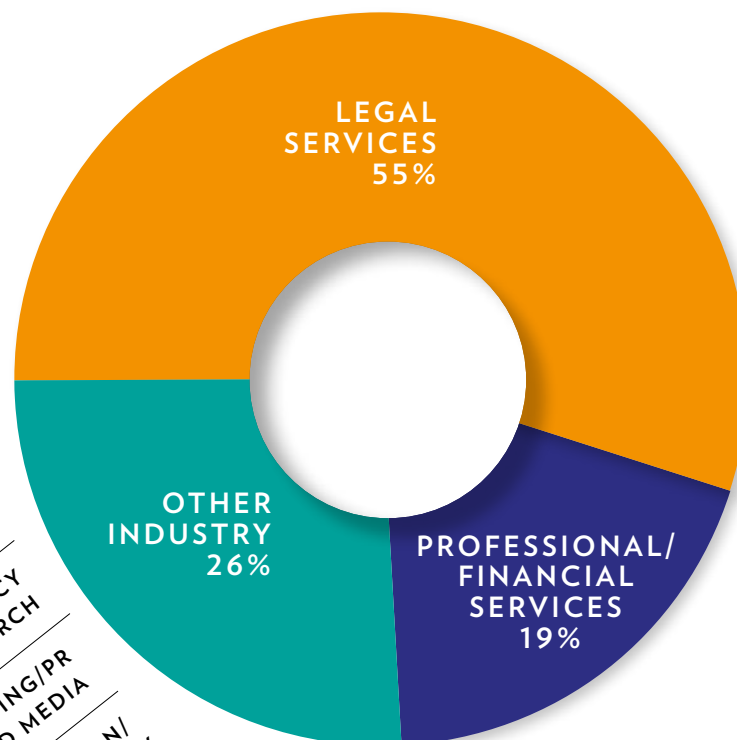
Eberlein at Thomson Snell & Passmore says: “Demand is always high in this field, and of course people can feel that they need to move to develop their careers. The onus should be on firms to find the right incentives to retain their talent.”

What hasn’t changed is the tendency to hire from within the profession. More than half (57%) of all hires

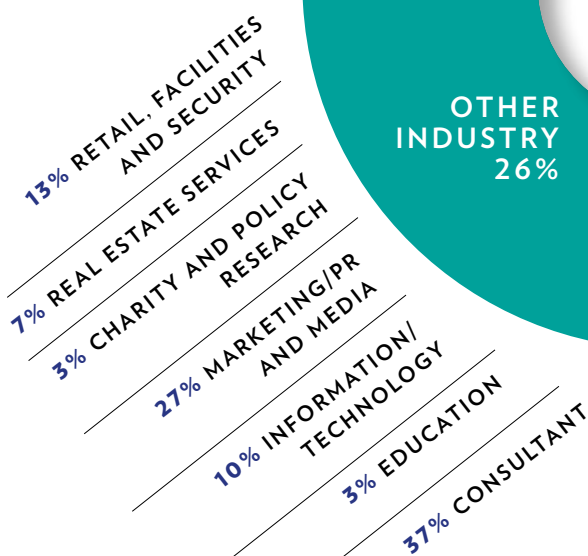
since 2012 have been from another law firm. Of those that aren’t from a law or other professional services firm, most have arrived from either consultancies or other marketing roles, most often in the media and communications sector. In terms of differences in hiring among the revenue bands, the smaller firms are the ones most likely to hire from outside legal. Since 2012, all the moves to firms in the £600m+ revenue band have come from either another law firm or a professional services firm. In contrast, over 30% of hires in the middle band (£100m–£200m) have come from other industries. This could be promising, especially if the fresh perspectives gained prove to be just as valuable as deep understanding of the legal industry when thinking about the demands of MBD.

Sarah-Jane Howitt, marketing director at Weightmans for almost 13 years, is another marketing professional to become a business services partner (back in 2014). “I’ve been fortunate that Weightmans is a firm that has continued to develop and challenge

## WHERE WAS YOUR PREVIOUS ROLE?



## WHICH SECTOR DID YOU WORK IN BEFORE?



– both in adopting technology and managing clients strategically. Sometimes in the legal sector it can be quite hard work to get your new ideas adopted.”

Moreover, Weightmans is a firm with no ‘C’ titles at all – it has a managing partner – but a number of partners from business services backgrounds. And, like Edwards at Michelmores, Howitt leads on all of BD, marketing and communications – but has ‘heads of’ each of those functions that report directly to her. “Everyone sits together”, and she agrees with Grove that it’s more effective to have an “integrated function” than the separate reporting lines witnessed elsewhere.

Middleton, who joined Addleshaw Goddard from ‘Big Four’ firm KPMG, says: “BD has very recently risen much higher up the agenda in law firms. There has been quite a journey to embrace change in some areas that are more established in other types of businesses, such as cross-selling and maximising the value of the relationship, which can also be an opportunity for those moving into the area as a new role.”

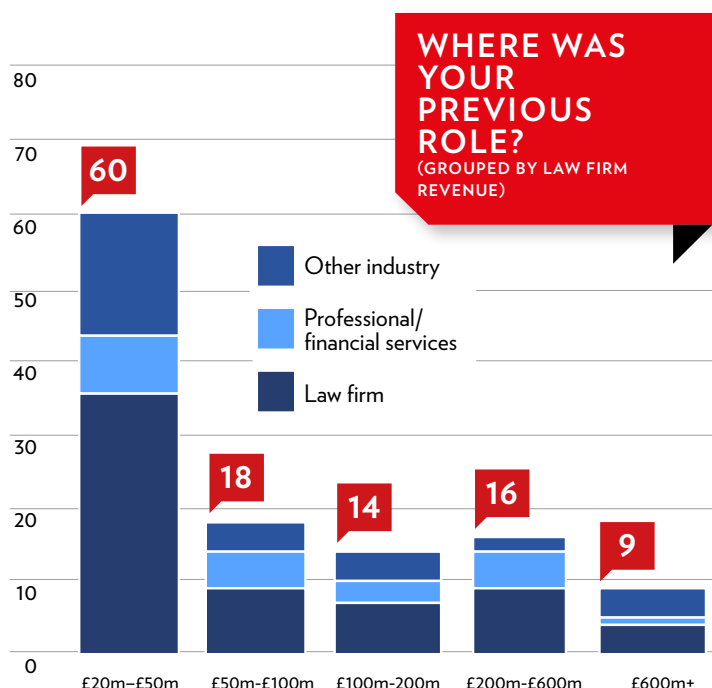
We will have to wait and see – however, if the last

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*Ben Middleton, business development director, Addleshaw Goddard*

five years are anything to go by, it looks as though the in-hiring habit won’t be going anywhere. Those looking to break into the legal sector from the outside may still have their work cut out. ▀





## PARTNER COMMENT

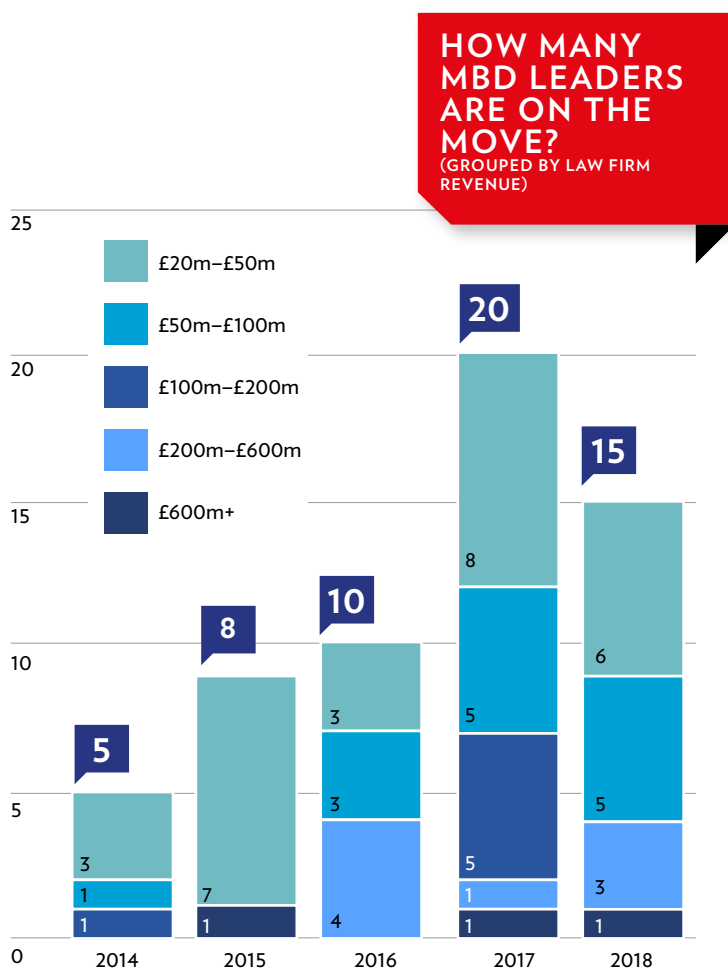
**Gareth Thomas, VP of sales at OnePlace, says more C-suite recruitment from outside the legal profession suggests law firm culture is also on the move**

The research insights about C-level appointments within law firms demonstrate key changes and developments in attitudes to leadership and culture within this sector. The first is a growing appreciation that the best lawyers do not necessarily make the best people to define, execute and deliver against strategic business plans. Linked to this realisation, law firms are beginning to take action, so we are seeing more C-level appointments from outside of the legal industry. This is a breath of fresh air, and in my dealings with clients and prospects I've seen first-hand that this approach is already leading to positive outcomes for the law firms taking that step.

Appointing from outside legal brings an opportunity to change firm culture. I'm heartened that firms are starting to acknowledge formally that sales, business development and client retention are important elements of success. We have seen the introduction of roles such as head of sales and head of client listening – unthinkable even five years ago – and while the chief marketing officer is still less common than other functional C-suite roles, it's undoubtedly on the increase.

It's my view that these trends will and should continue at pace – each has been a long time coming. They bring significant impact around revenue growth and profitability, an increased opportunity to define and deliver against growth strategies and, crucially, they will help to ensure firms survive ever-intensifying competition. I'm looking forward to witnessing further positive change ahead.

**This is a breath of fresh air ... Appointing from outside legal brings an opportunity to change culture.**







03

## Diversity improvement initiatives are delivering – at least for BD leaders

**W**ithin the last decade there has been a lot of focus on the proportion of women in business leadership roles, for obvious reasons. Under new legislation, many law firms and other businesses have had to publish their gender pay gaps, and are under pressure to close them. There has also been closer scrutiny of the number of women in top positions across the board. For example, for the FTSE 100, there has been a target set by the government-backed Hampton-Alexander Review of 33% women on boards by 2020 (last reported in 2018, the current figure at the time of writing is 29%). This is still too low, but is a jump from 17% in 2013.

It would appear that marketing and business development in law firms is ahead of this curve and has been for some time. Perhaps the biggest note to come out of this year's research is a small increase in the number of women occupying what was already the majority of top marketing and business development spots (58% women, 42% men). That's an increase from 55% MBD leaders being women in 2013.

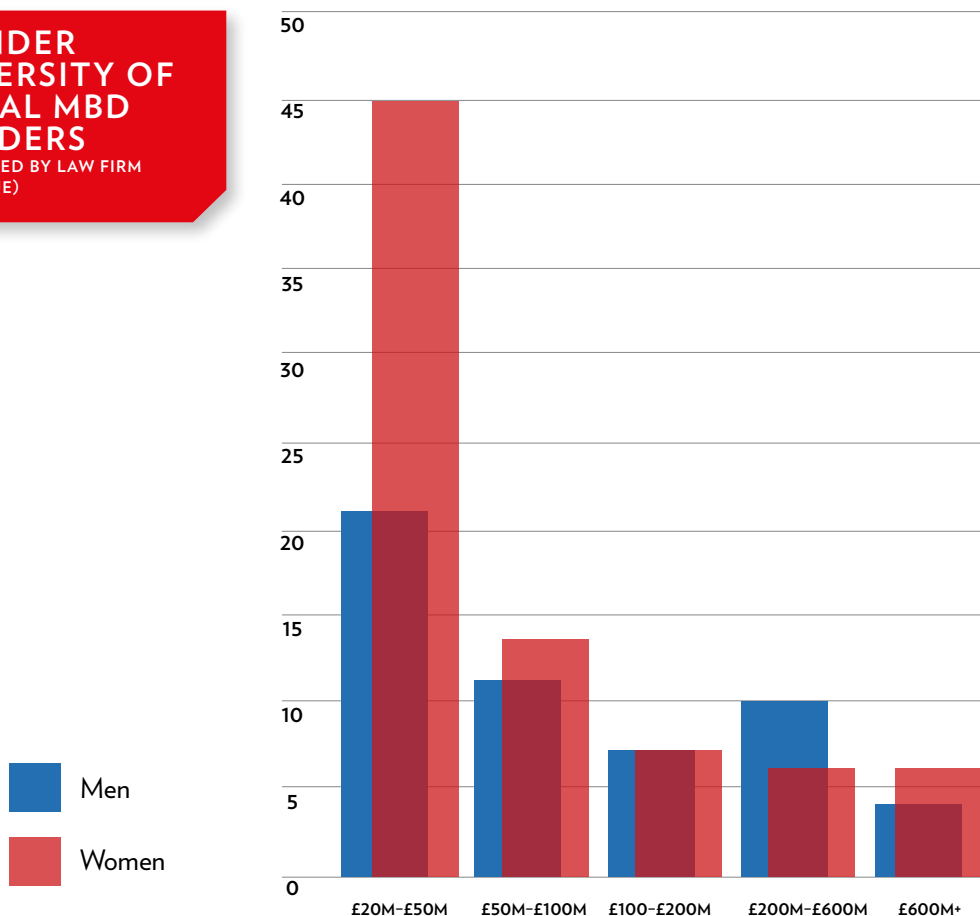
Louise Edwards says: "Hopefully it's a trend rather than a blip, and I'd like to think that a greater emphasis on diversity and inclusivity may have helped – firms are certainly more alive now to the diversity and inclusivity agenda and unconscious bias.

"I think client pressure will only become more vocal in the legal sphere, with GCs insisting on a percentage of women advisers on their teams. This will mainly be in the lawyer space rather than support services, such as marketing or finance. However, I think the composition of boards will become more relevant from both a client

**"Client pressure will only become more vocal in the legal sphere, with GCs insisting on a percentage of women advisers on their teams."**

*Louise Edwards, marketing director, Michelmores*

**GENDER DIVERSITY OF LEGAL MBD LEADERS**  
(GROUPED BY LAW FIRM REVENUE)



**“There is some client pressure now surrounding diversity of teams – and not just diversity in terms of characteristics. We’re also seeing demand for more business services professionals to be part of the client team.”**

*Sarah-Jane Howitt, marketing director, Weightmans*

and a business perspective. Clients will want to see greater diversity on boards, and from the perspective of the business, it’s proven that more diverse teams deliver better results – both in terms of growth and profitability. So, being more diverse isn’t only the right thing to do – it’s the smart thing to do.”

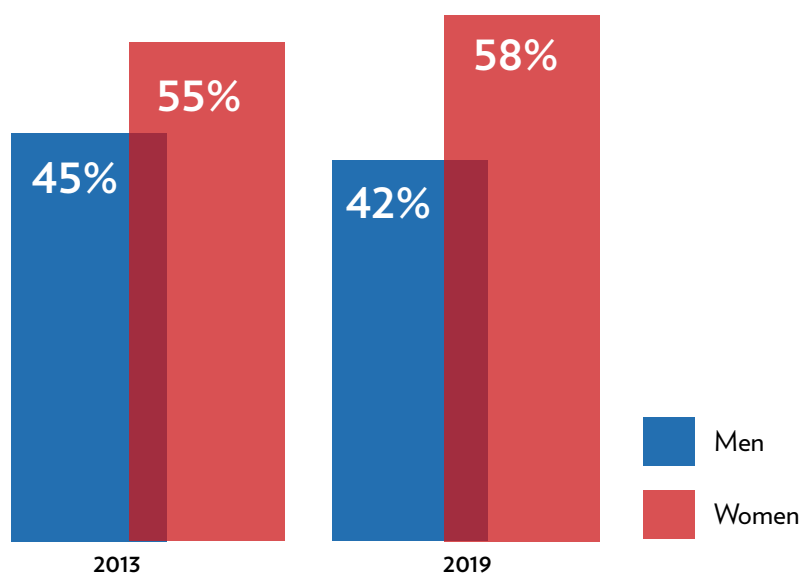
Sarah-Jane Howitt agrees. “There is some client pressure now surrounding diversity of teams – and not just diversity in terms of characteristics. We’re also seeing demand for more businesses services

professionals to be part of the client team delivering the solution.

“On the other hand, the individuals have to want to be in the roles, so some firms may also need to do some more to make leadership positions more attractive to a wider group of people.” Flexible working practices (and culture) is the most obvious lever, she says.

Eberlein adds: “Personally, I’ve never felt any pressure to recruit anyone but the best person for the job – but I do like that my own team has a balance, as it can bring helpfully diverse perspectives on our business challenges.”

However, there’s a detectable leadership diversity difference across the revenue bands. There are many more women leading the function in firms in the lower half by revenue, and quite a sudden change when we reach the £200m–£600m band. It is still a fairly even split, however, especially considering ratios in other areas of business services (IT currently sits at an extremely low 12% women leaders, and only 22% of HR directors are men). So, it must be a positive to see a better balance here. ▲



**GENDER  
DIVERSITY OF  
MBD LEADERS  
CHANGE OVER  
TIME**

**PARTNER  
COMMENT**

**Tim Smith, CEO at OnePlace, says the gender diversity at the top of the business development and marketing function is a promising sign of progress**

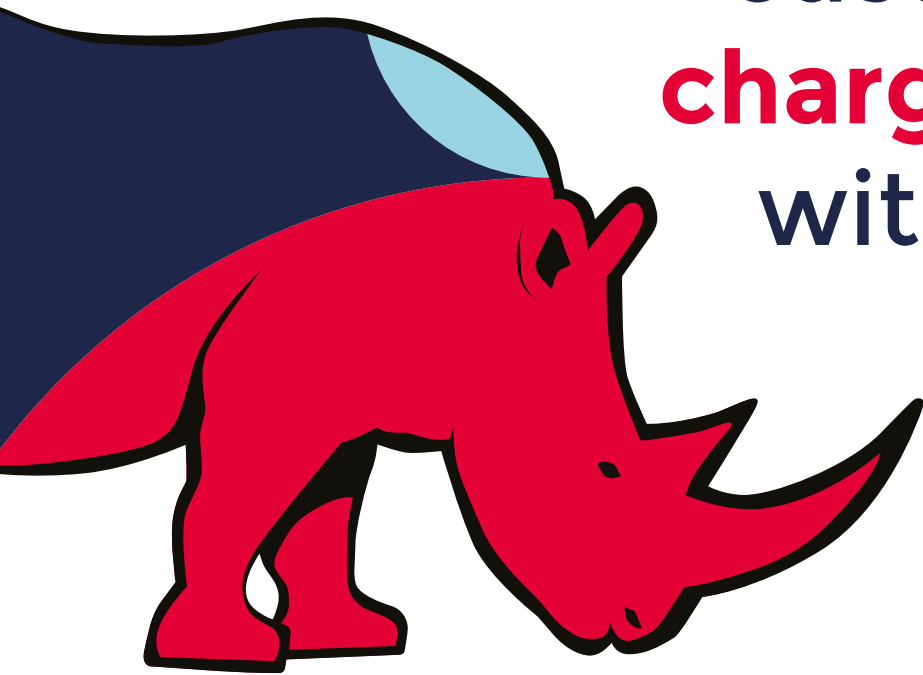
We've found, not surprisingly, and reassuringly, that firms are beginning to understand that being inclusive is part of being a successful modern law firm. Firms are introducing diversity and inclusion programmes to unlock the power of their workforce and deliver even more value to clients. At the same time, those clients are also proactively pushing for compliance, with supplier diversity programmes becoming more and more common. This is a welcome positive trend in a sector not renowned historically for its inclusion and equality.

When it comes to the gap between men and women, it's interesting that for the top marketing and business development roles the split is pretty even, in spite of a slight widening in favour of women. I hope the percentage gap will remain small, because it's cause for celebration that legal marketing and business development is considerably ahead of the game compared with functions such as IT and finance, where there's significantly more work to be done.

Law firms still need to become more diverse and include a greater breadth of viewpoints to better reflect their clients. We've found that a client listening strategy goes hand in hand with this. It has a positive role to play in proactively shaping the right team for an engagement. We've seen firms save client relationships where feedback has uncovered deficits and firms have made significant changes in response. In the past, situations like this might well have remained unknown to a firm – going unchecked, to the detriment of both the firm and its clients.



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