



## A market in motion | 2025

The evolving landscape of BD, Marketing & Communications positions in Australia's professional services market.

- **Year in Review**
- **Salary Survey**

2025 revealed a market that moved cautiously at the top, accelerated through the middle, and evolved quietly below the surface.

At times, the market this year has felt slow, especially at the senior-level, but when you take a closer look, the *shape* of roles and what firms expect from their BD and Marketing teams is changing quickly. AI has a lot to do with that, but not in the “*robots are taking jobs*” way the media loves to portray. More in a “*how do we stop our talented resources drowning in admin?*” way.

Some of the main themes I've seen this year include:



## Mergers, separations and private capital are reshaping the market

This year saw a steady flow of mergers across the professional services market, and that momentum looks set to continue. For many mid-market firms, consolidation offers a clear pathway to scale, enabling larger, more consistent campaigns, meaningful investment in AI and data, and the ability to build centres of excellence such as Client Relationship or Pursuits teams. The result is a more sophisticated, commercially driven BD and Marketing function.

Alongside this, the Australian market has also seen notable structural shifts, including the separation of KWM, reinforcing that growth isn't always linear and that firms are actively reassessing how they are best positioned to compete.

Private equity interest in Australian law firms is also becoming an increasingly important part of this story. While still selective, PE-backed models are accelerating investment decisions, sharpening performance expectations, and placing greater emphasis on scalable, data-led BD and Marketing capabilities.

From a hiring perspective, mergers, separations and private capital all tend to trigger two immediate needs:

1. Experienced operators who can integrate teams, lift capability, and professionalise functions at pace; and
2. Rising expectations of BD and Marketing teams, as firm ambitions and scrutiny step up almost overnight.

## AI is becoming part of the workflow

Every firm talked about AI last year. This year... they're actually using it.

The big shift I've noticed is that AI has moved from an "interesting experiment" to "how can we get work done faster and better"? Tools like Harvey, Lexis+ AI have been well adopted broadly across the legal sector and AI platforms like QorusDocs and Responsive are now being used to help BD teams create, manage, and submit proposals, tenders, and presentations faster.

A useful example of how AI is being applied inside law firms is Leonard, a voice-enabled AI agent designed for Marketing and BD teams. Rather than replacing roles, Leonard tackles one of the sector's biggest friction points: capturing lawyers' knowledge efficiently.

Through short, structured voice conversations, Leonard gathers matter information directly from fee earners and converts it into usable content for directories, pitches, credentials and websites. The value isn't automation for its own sake, but the removal of repetitive admin that traditionally absorbs disproportionate amounts of BD and marketing time.

Tools like this illustrate where AI is having the greatest impact in firms today; not by eliminating jobs, but by freeing skilled professionals to focus on higher-value, strategic work. Just don't expect these agents to operate at the level of a Senior Advisor... at least not just yet!



Beyond using AI to improve efficiency, we're seeing growing interest in how firms are represented in tools like ChatGPT and Copilot, as clients increasingly use them for research and comparison.

This isn't being approached as a tactical SEO exercise. Instead, firms recognise that AI visibility is driven by the same fundamentals that underpin strong BD and marketing functions: clear articulation of expertise, high-quality and well-structured content, credible signals of authority, and consistent capture of matter experience. As a result, this is reinforcing the importance of content governance, data quality and cross-functional collaboration between marketing, BD, communications, knowledge and IT.

While still early days, "showing up well in AI" is quickly becoming part of broader brand and growth conversations - another signal that BD and marketing teams are moving from campaign execution towards long-term capability building.

### **Senior hiring has been quiet... but junior to mid-level hiring was strong, despite multiple restructures**

Hiring at the Senior Manager level and above remained tight this year. Not because firms don't value senior BD and marketing talent, they absolutely do, but because movement was limited. At the senior end of the market, recruitment relies on churn. When people stay put, the flow-on simply isn't there.

Candidates have been cautious about leaving stable roles, while firms have been equally cautious about creating senior positions unless they are clearly tied to growth priorities. The confidence dip that followed the US election, and then the Australian election, has also lingered longer than many expected.

As a result and like last year, we've worked with several candidates who have previously held "Head of" titles stepping into Senior Manager roles, attracted by the strength of the remit, opportunity and salary - at a time when top-end roles have been limited.

Law firms haven't been immune to broader restructures either, despite being counter-cyclical in nature. This year we've seen realignments and redundancies - not on the scale of financial services or accounting, but enough to influence confidence and decision-making around hiring.

That said, one of the clearest structural shifts in 2025 has been a renewed focus on delivery and execution.

During the COVID slowdown, firms placed significant emphasis on strategic hires - leaders tasked with resetting functions, redesigning approaches and repositioning the firm. In 2025, the pendulum has swung. We've seen increased demand for junior and mid-level roles (Coordinator, Advisor and Senior Advisor), driven by the need for scaled output and efficiency.

In multiple instances, a Manager or Senior Manager role has been replaced with two or more Advisor/Executive or Coordinator hires. This isn't a reflection of diminished value placed on senior, strategic leadership, but rather a pragmatic response to workload, budgets and the



immediate demands of the business. We expect demand for these “*engine room*” practitioners to remain strong into 2026.

## **Bids & pursuits is still in demand**

If there’s one area that has remained consistently busy all year, it’s bids and pursuits.

Even when firms paused hiring elsewhere, investment in this space continued. Pursuits teams are being built out into increasingly refined centres of excellence, with a clear mandate: run smarter, more commercial tender processes and, ultimately, lift win rates.

Rather than reducing demand, AI is actually accelerating it. While AI can speed up drafting and content production, it doesn’t replace the need for experienced professionals who can shape a compelling narrative, manage complex stakeholder groups, and bring a pursuit strategy together under pressure.

## **Data is the thing every firm agrees is critical... but not every firm is doing well.**

A lot of firms still have CRMs that are underused, poorly integrated, or seen as admin. These ones struggle to get meaningful insights out. Others have governance and standards in place, and they’re using well-connected tech stacks properly, to drive targeting and strategy.

This year we’ve seen many firms conduct CRM reviews and upgrades: HubSpot and Nexl appear to be gaining popularity in the mid-market and some firms are moving to Dynamics or Salesforce where they want tighter marketing automation links to help grow accounts.

## **Client experience is becoming everyone’s problem (in a good way)**

Client experience continues to climb the agenda and it’s no longer being viewed as just a BD initiative.

There seems to have been a shift in approach to start treating CX as a firmwide capability, spanning partners, delivery teams, marketing, BD and operations, shifting the rhetoric from isolated client-touchpoint improvements to designing a more consistent, intentional end-to-end experience.

Equally, we’ve spoken to many law firms about voice-of-client programs, structured feedback loops and more disciplined approaches to listening to clients. Firms increasingly recognise that anecdotal partner feedback isn’t enough; they want real data they can act on. The challenge, however, remains budget. CX is widely acknowledged as important, but in many firms, it is still competing for funding against more immediate growth or delivery pressures.

That shift is reflected in how firms are thinking about roles, capability and measurement. We’re seeing greater emphasis on account planning, relationship management, cross-selling, client listening and retention, which signals that CX is becoming embedded in how firms grow, not just how they pitch.



## Return-to-office rules and location preferences are still affecting hiring

When hiring, there has been a continued preference among firms to consider Sydney or Melbourne-based candidates. A significant proportion of BD and marketing talent has relocated interstate in recent years, prompting a renewed focus on maintaining local presence, profile, and representation in these core markets.

Hybrid working remains the norm, but firms are quietly tightening their policies. A small number have taken a firmer stance, linking bonus or salary review outcomes to an average of three days per week in the office across the year.

Whether or not you agree with that approach, it matters from a hiring perspective. Flexibility is now a baseline expectation, not a differentiator. Firms considering a move to four- or five-day office weeks are likely to find it increasingly difficult to attract and retain top BD and marketing talent.

## What candidates are saying

Candidate motivations haven't really changed, but expectations are sharper. The big drivers are still salary and benefits (parental leave allowance, gym membership, healthcare etc.) culture, clarity on title and role remit, career progression, & flexibility.

Firms that offer "Senior" tiers across Coordinator, Executive, Advisor, and Manager roles often see stronger employee retention, as these titles provide a clear and achievable pathway for internal progression. Where large gaps exist in responsibility and remuneration, particularly between Advisor and Manager levels, ambitious employees may look externally for advancement, even when the role itself offers limited change. Clear visibility of career progression remains a key priority for junior candidates, especially for CV development. As a result, long-term career pathways should be a strategic focus for leadership teams, while candidates must conduct thorough due diligence on both the opportunities they pursue and the roles they leave behind.

Bonuses continue to be a weak point for legal vs other sectors. Many candidates look at financial services / real estate / tech and see 15%-40% bonus potential at senior levels, compared to 5%-15% in law. Firms that can tell a good total package story tend to fair better when competing for talent.

## Looking into 2026

My sense is that many of these themes will roll straight into next year, but with a faster start. In particular, we expect increased activity at the senior level, with several high-profile roles likely to come to market in the first quarter as confidence returns and deferred decisions are released.

Employers hiring in 2026 will need to be more intentional in how they attract and secure talent. Candidate expectations continue to evolve, and firms that succeed will be those that balance pace, flexibility and clarity in their recruitment strategies.



Rigid approaches to shortlisting are likely to limit access to talent. Employers who prioritise capability, adaptability and long-term potential over narrow sector experience will be better positioned to fill roles quickly and sustainably. At the same time, hiring processes will need to be decisive. Delays and overly complex interview stages risk disengaging high-quality candidates who are increasingly confident in their options.

Employer reputation will play a growing role in hiring outcomes. Clear communication, thoughtful candidate experience and meaningful engagement with recruiters will directly influence how firms are perceived in the market. Flexibility will remain a non-negotiable for many candidates, extending beyond hybrid working to include part-time arrangements and broader role design as well as location will be important.

To compete effectively, firms will also need to clearly articulate their value proposition. Whether that's through culture, remit, opportunities for career progression, whilst ensuring remuneration reflects market realities. Firms willing to adapt in these areas will be best placed to secure talent in 2026 and beyond.

***For further information on any of these points or to discuss the professional services market in more detail, please don't hesitate to reach out to Will Dunn, Managing Director, +61 457 885 505 or [wdunn@ampersand.com.au](mailto:wdunn@ampersand.com.au)***



# PROFESSIONAL SERVICES SALARY SURVEY 2025/26

*All salaries are inclusive of superannuation but excluding any bonus entitlement.*

Experience	Low	High	Average
BD, Marketing or Bid Assistant, Coordinator OR (Executive)	\$85,000	\$110,000	\$95,000
BD, Marketing or Bid Advisor, (Executive), Consultant or Specialist	\$105,000	\$135,000	\$120,000
BD, Marketing or Bid, Senior Advisor, Senior Executive or Junior Manager	\$110,000	\$150,000	\$135,000
BD or Bid Manager (no team management)	\$140,000	\$200,000	\$165,000
Manager - Marketing, Brand, Communications or Digital	\$140,000	\$195,000	\$165,000
BD, Marketing, Communications or Bid Manager (team management responsibilities)	\$160,000	\$230,000	\$195,000
Senior BD, Marketing, Communications OR Bid Manager	\$185,000	\$260,000	\$230,000
Senior BD Manager or Head-Of (team management responsibilities)	\$190,000	\$325,000	\$260,000
Director or CMO	\$290,000	\$550,000	\$350,000

