

Corporate Legal Operations Compensation Survey

April 20, 2022

brightflag



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

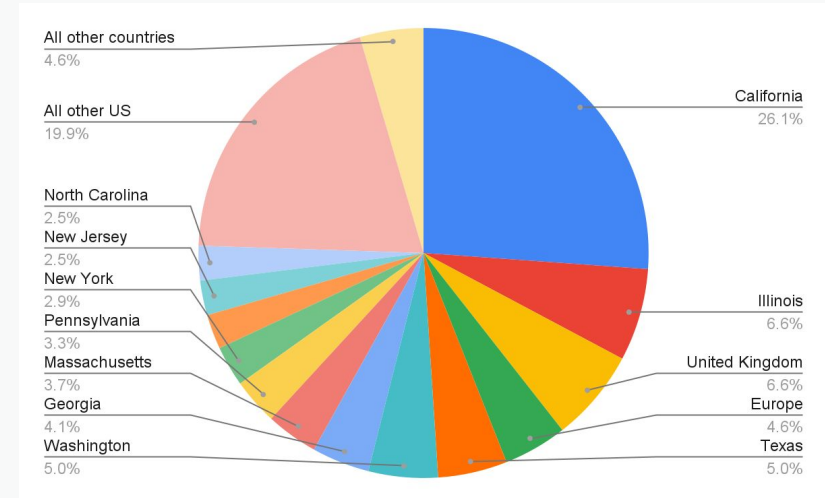
Disclaimers

- 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

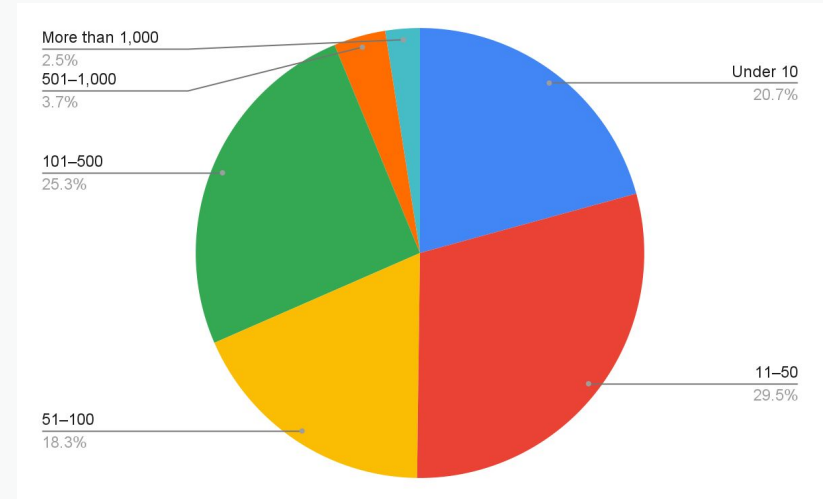
Work location

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



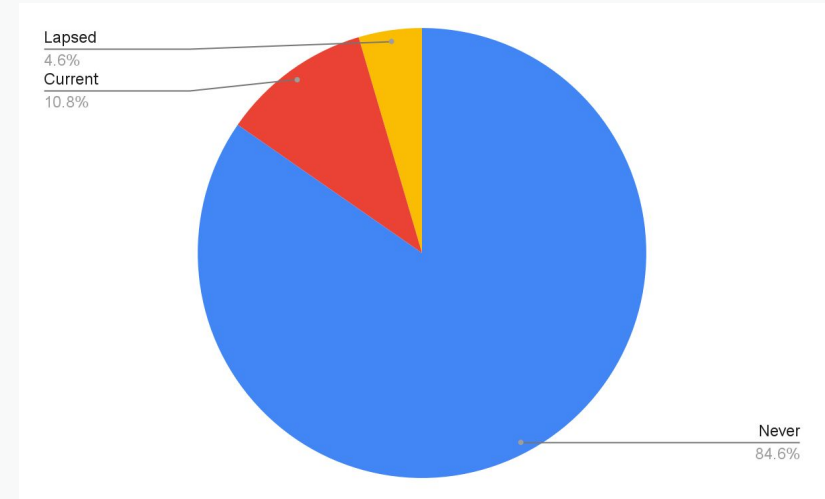
Department size

- 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



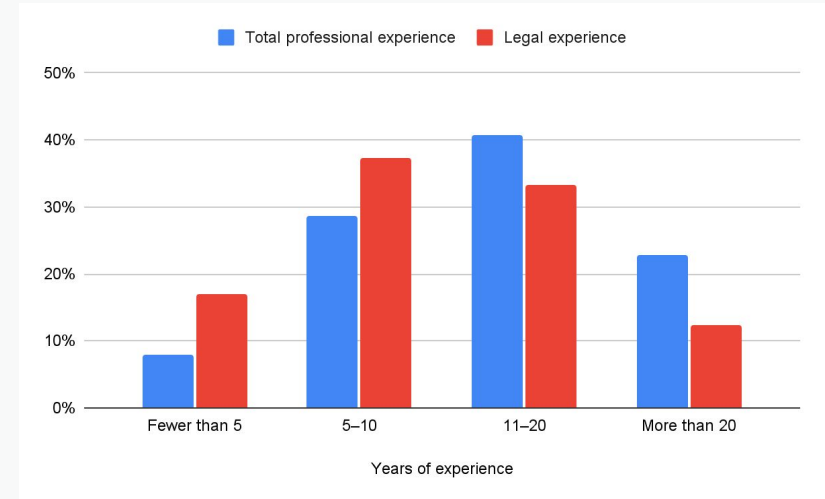
Bar admittance

- Globally, only 15% of respondents admitted to practice law
- Considerable regional variance:
 - US: 11%
 - UK: 31%
 - Elsewhere: 45%



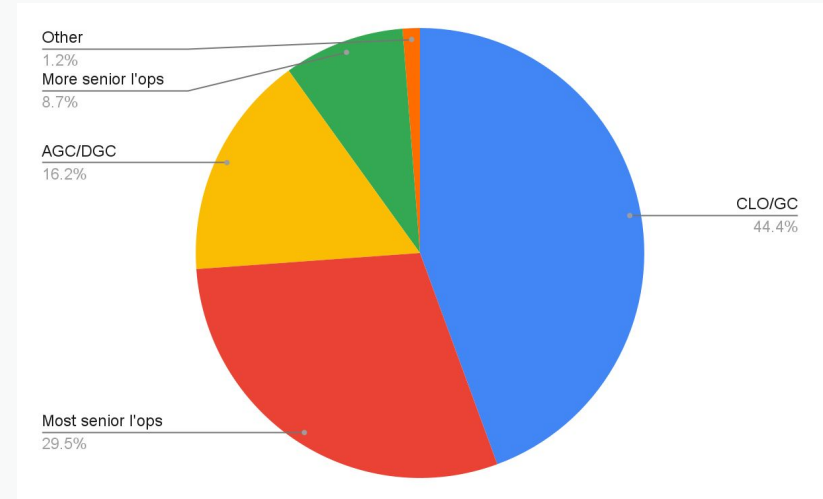
Experience

- 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



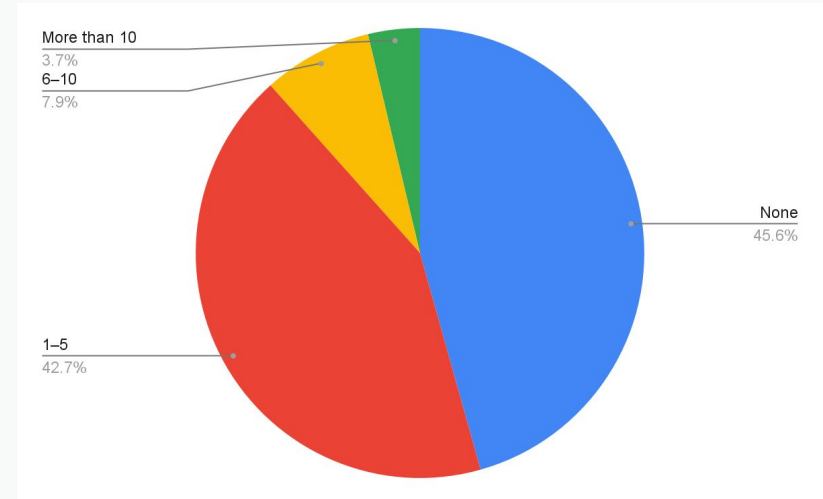
Reporting line

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



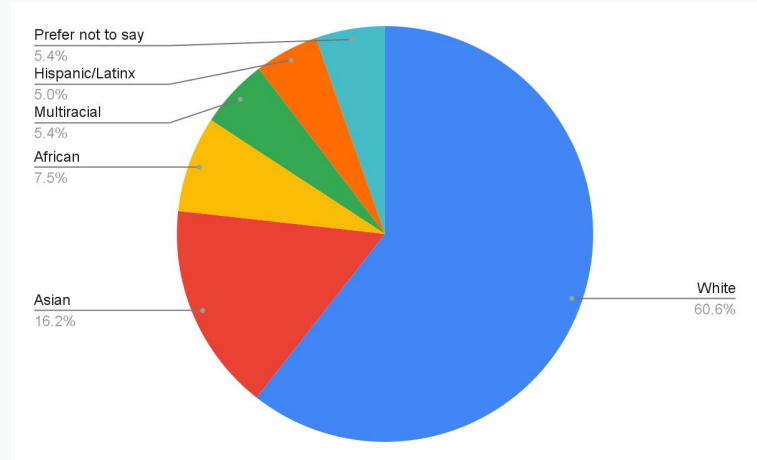
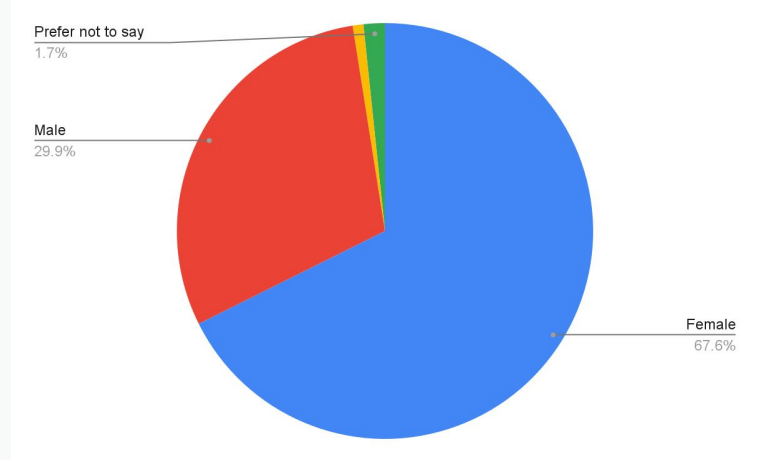
People management

- 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”

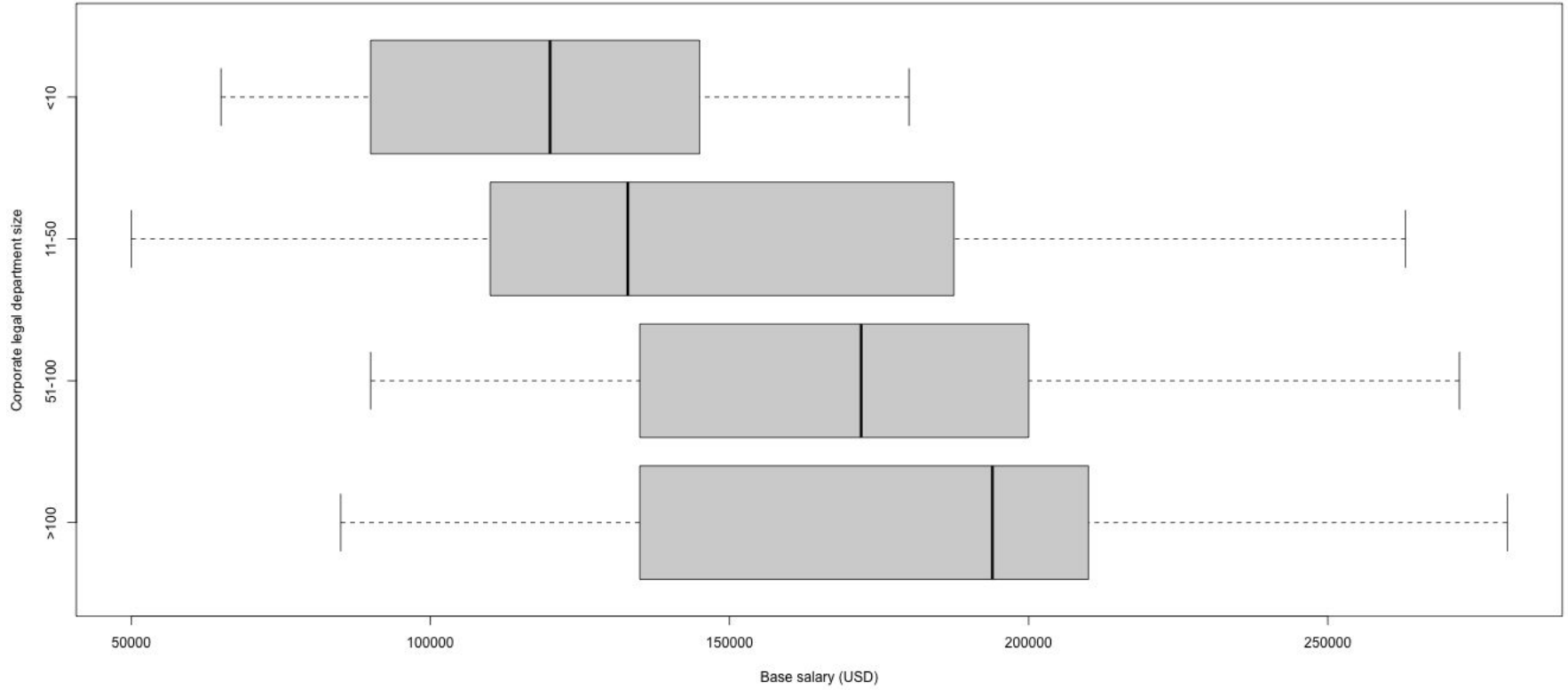
Most respondents receive a cash bonus

- 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

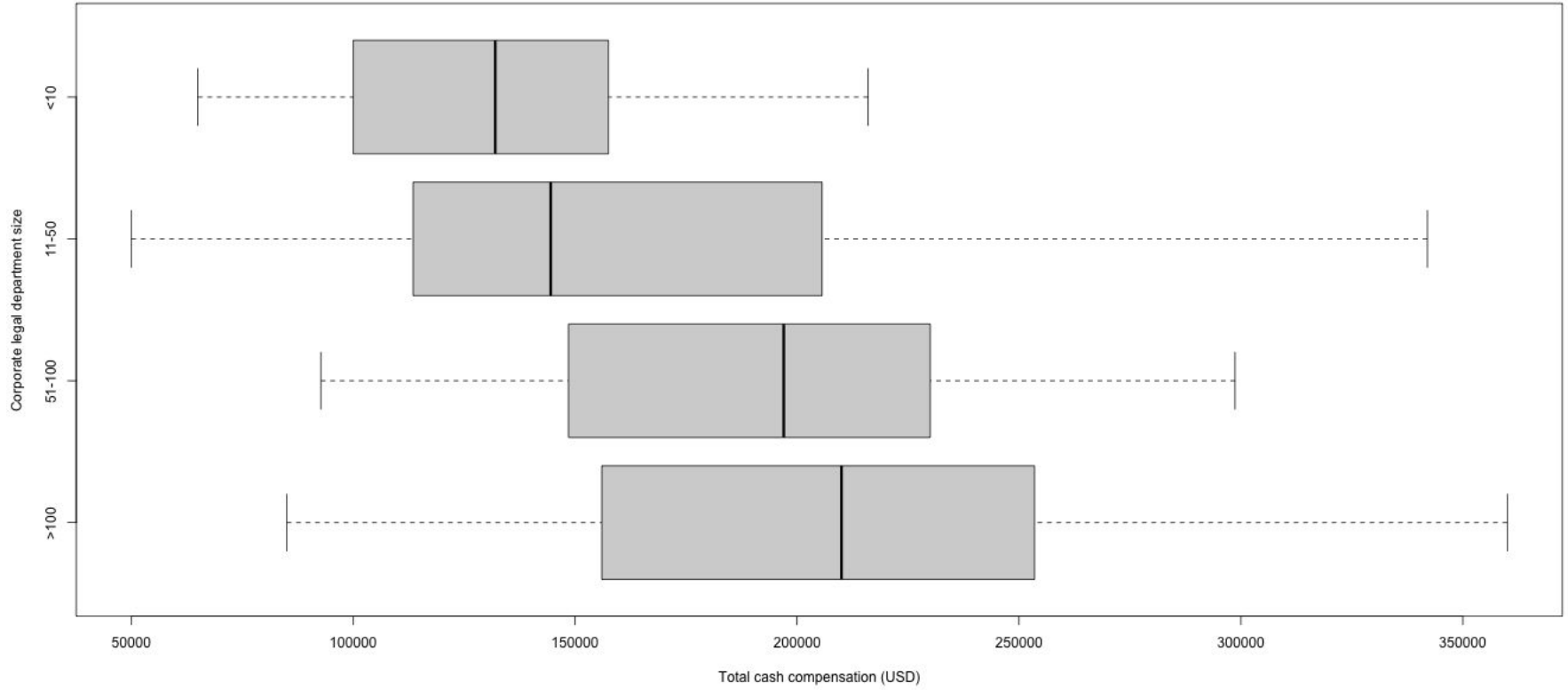
About half of respondents receive equity

- 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

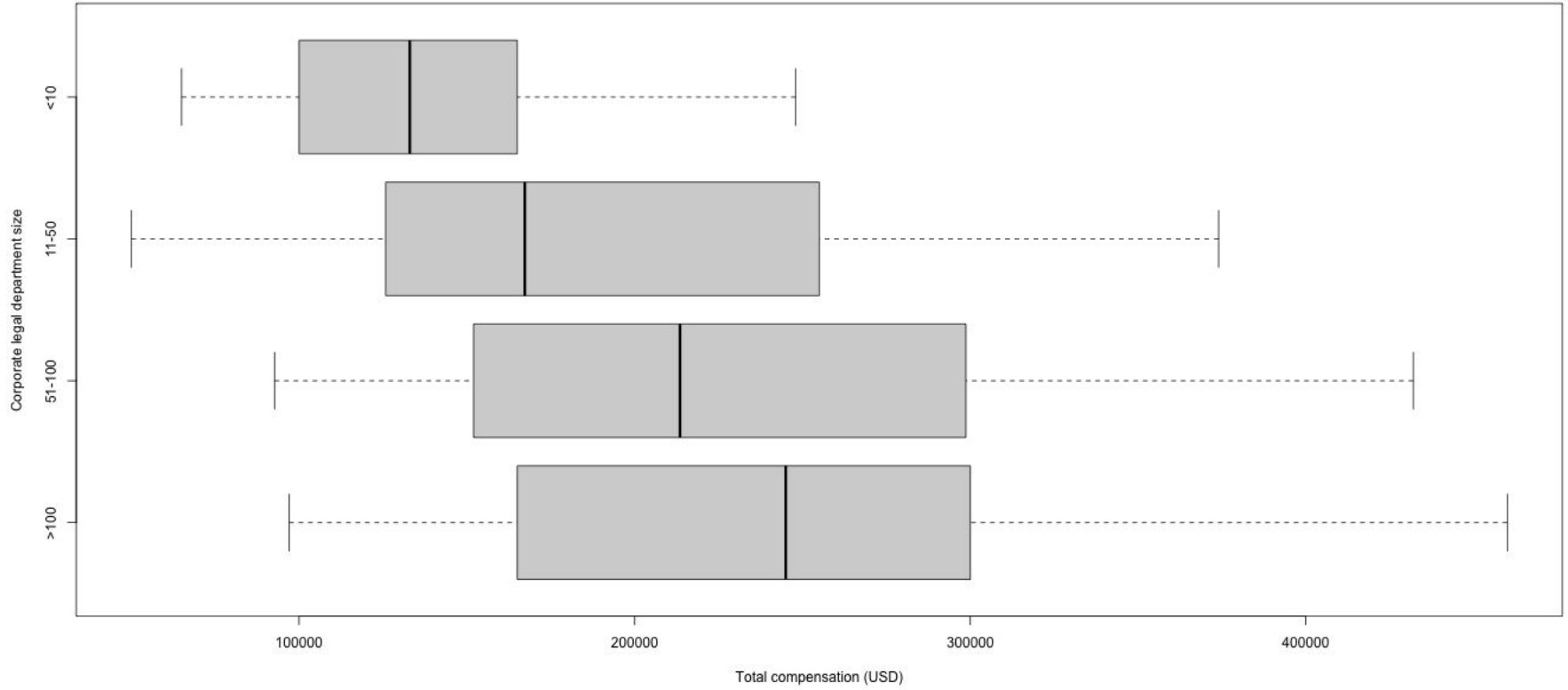
Base salary: heads of legal ops



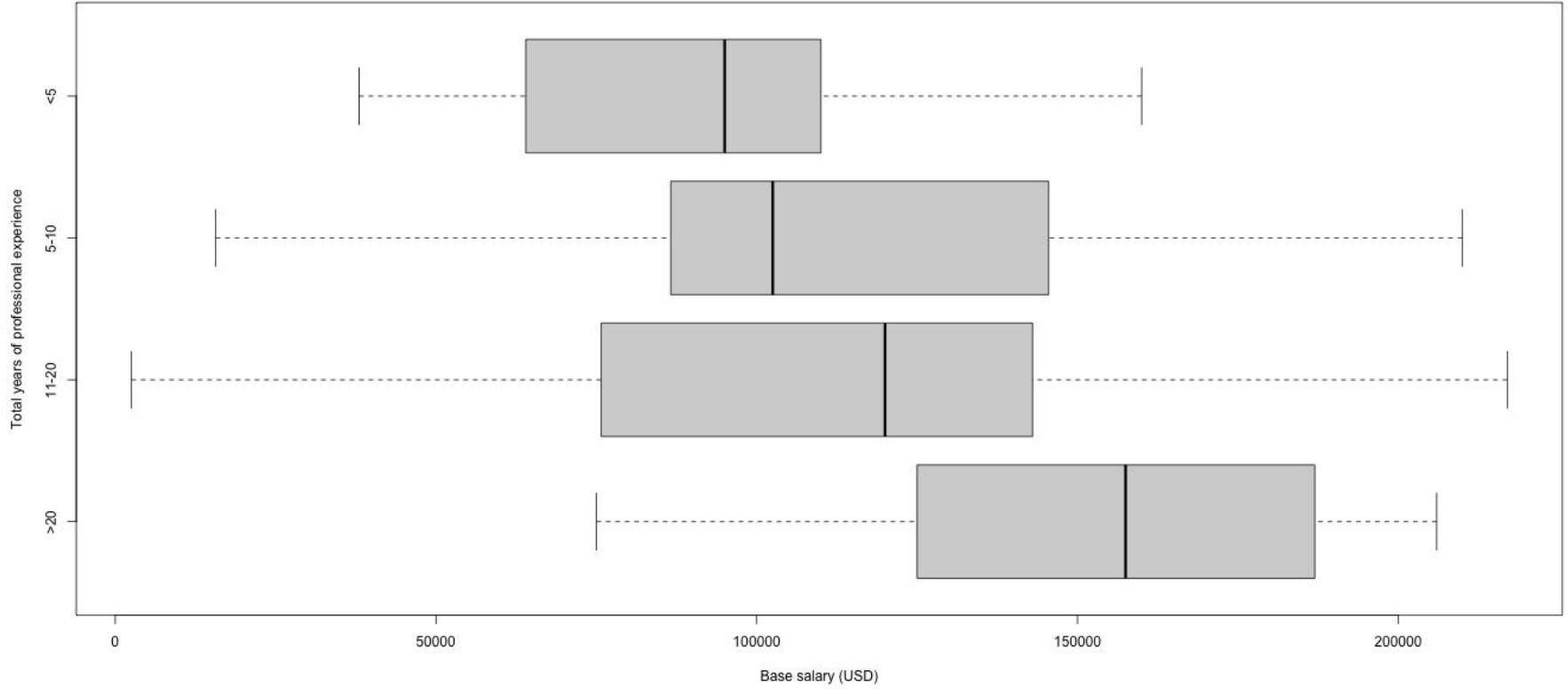
Total cash compensation: heads of legal ops



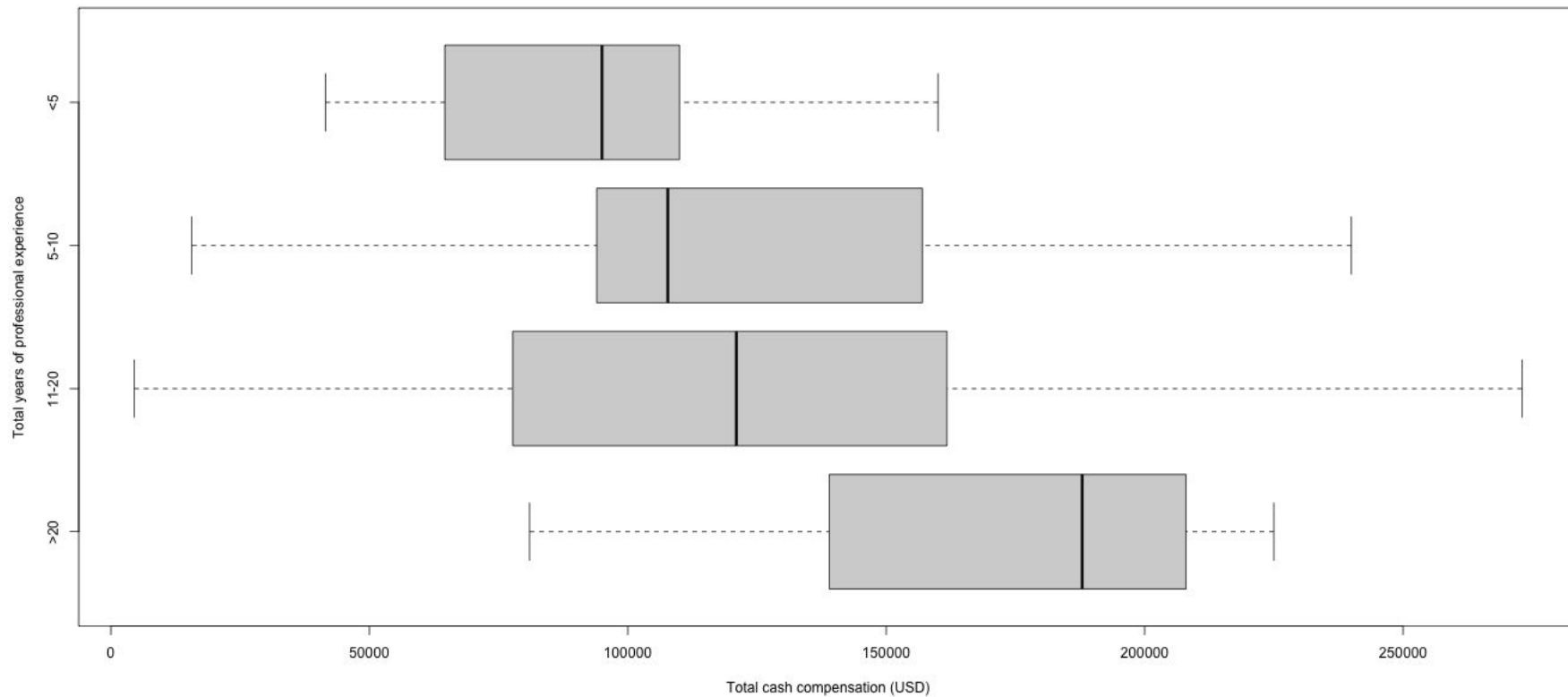
Total compensation: heads of legal ops



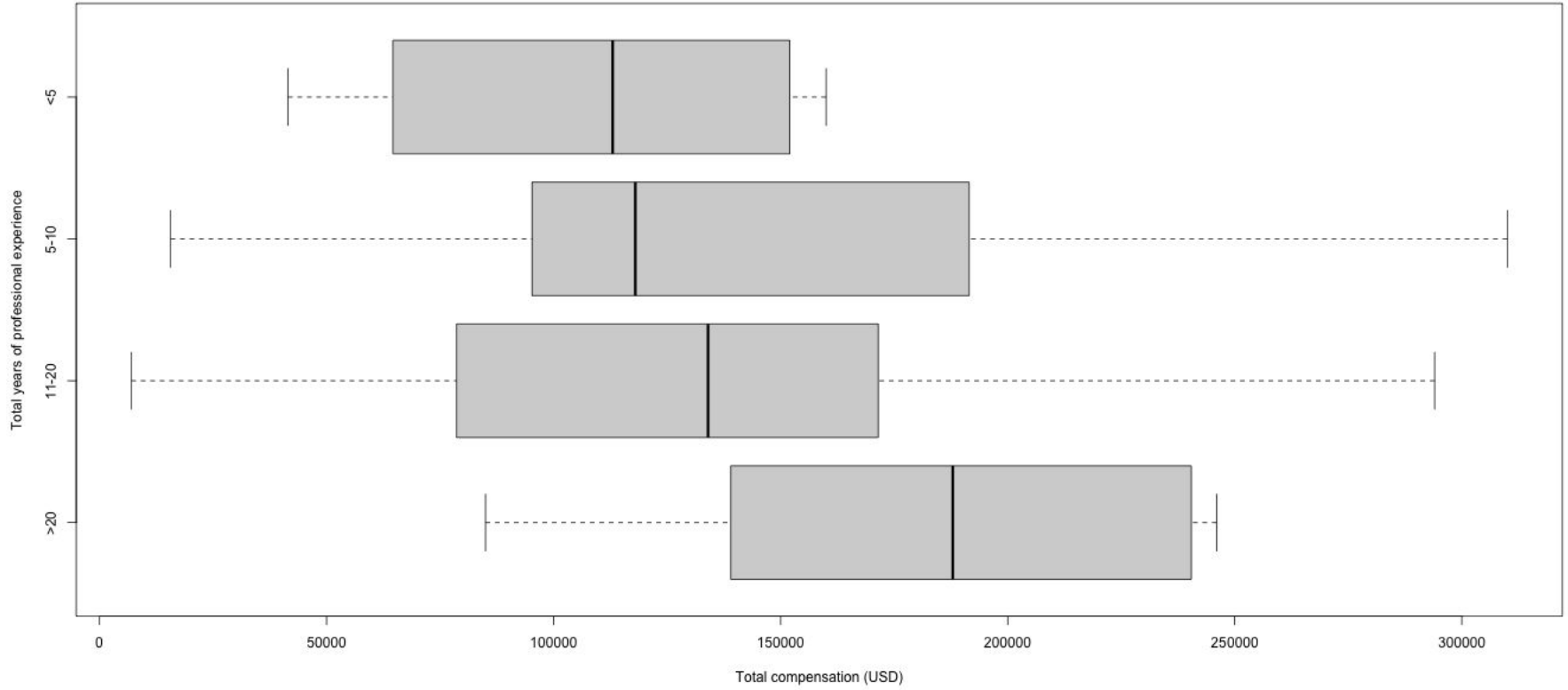
Base salary: other legal ops roles



Total cash compensation: other legal ops roles



Total compensation: other legal ops roles



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

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

Heads of legal ops

Other legal ops roles

Overall	\$0.78	Overall	\$1.05
CLD <10	\$1.03	Exp <5	\$0.92
CLD 10–50	\$0.69	Exp 5–10	\$0.83
CLD 51–100	\$0.89	Exp 11–20	\$1.26
CLD >100	\$0.78	Exp >20	\$0.98

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

Heads of legal ops

Other legal ops roles

Overall	\$1.13	Overall	\$1.11
CLD <10	\$1.10	Exp <5	\$1.31
CLD 10–50	\$0.96	Exp 5–10	\$1.35
CLD 51–100	\$1.43	Exp 11–20	\$0.81
CLD >100	\$1.51	Exp >20	Too little data

\$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

Total experience	Location	Role	CLD size	Total cash (USD)	Total comp (USD)	Diverse
11–20 years	US (not CA)	Head of legal ops	51–100 people	\$575,000	\$775,000	Gender, ethnicity
>20 years	California	Other legal ops	>100 people	\$399,510	\$474,510	Gender, ethnicity
>20 years	California	Head of legal ops	>100 people	\$360,000	\$460,000	Ethnicity
>20 years	California	Head of legal ops	>100 people	\$355,000	\$455,000	No
5–10 years	California	Other legal ops	>100 people	\$331,000	\$443,000	Gender, ethnicity
>20 years	California	Head of legal ops	51–100 people	\$367,000	\$432,000	Ethnicity
>20 years	Outside US	Head of legal ops	>100 people	\$400,000	\$400,000	No
11–20 years	US (not CA)	Head of legal ops	<10 people	\$385,000	\$385,000	Gender
5–10 years	US (not CA)	Head of legal ops	>100 people	\$305,000	\$385,000	Gender
11–20 years	California	Head of legal ops	11–50 people	\$264,000	\$374,000	Ethnicity

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

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- 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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