

Legal Sector Salary Benchmark Report

APAC & ME – April 2025



Our refreshed 2025 Salary Benchmarks for Business Development, Marketing & Communications professionals has a focused lens on the legal sector across Asia Pacific (APAC) and the Middle East (ME).

Reflecting the highly nuanced nature of BD, Marketing, and Communications roles within law firms and **organisational structures, role expectations, and title variances** that set this sector apart from other professional services. Our data captures deep market insight drawn exclusively from search work, candidate interviews, budget discussions, and recent placements in this sector.

Some highlights of this report compared to publishing 6 months ago include:

- **Australia:** We have introduced benchmarks for Advisor-level roles, and increased the lower end of Manager bands across every specialism. This reflects the continued demand in early-career and mid-tier talent, as well as a tightening candidate market.
- **Hong Kong:** Ranges have held steady in a period with less activity in this market when compared to other centres.
- **Singapore:** Again BD focused roles experienced an upwards adjustment with BD Manager and Senior BD Manager both in high demand. There were many newly created roles at both levels and given it is such a tight candidate market, we saw the most substantial salary increases within these bands.

These changes reflect not only **rising competition for talent**, but also an evolving expectation around the **commercial and strategic impact** of BD, Marketing and Communications roles in law firms. Titles continue to vary across firms — a factor we've considered carefully in compiling this report. Where possible, we have used the most commonly understood functional titles to provide clarity and consistency.

As always, these benchmarks serve as a **guide for law firm leaders and HR teams** looking to shape competitive, realistic business cases and secure top talent in the current environment. These ranges reflect the bulk of the legal market including international, large national, mid-tier and leading boutique and specialist firms. Once firms are large enough to hire BDMC professionals, they are competing over the same talent and so the bandings are the same. In Australia, there is minimal differential between States.

We acknowledge that there will be examples of professionals paid above and below these bands. This is not a Salary Survey. These benchmarks reflect current market activity and our recommendation for your salary budgets when considering your teams and when hiring.

Given this, there will be people paid either side of the ranges, however they will be minimal in number and considered by us to be either: above/below market, or, an extreme stretching of job title diversity, or, internal promotions accounting for time to grow into the role.

We will continue to update this report biannually. For more tailored advice on salary positioning for a specific role or team structure, we welcome direct conversations.

Roles above Senior Manager are reviewed in our Leadership Roles Salary Benchmark Report, available on request.

AUSTRALIA (AUD)

JOB CLASSIFICATION	LOW (ANNUAL)	HIGH (ANNUAL)
BD Advisor / Senior Advisor	120,000	145,000
BD Manager (inc sector, clients)	160,000	210,000
Senior BD Manager (inc sector, clients)	200,000	260,000
Communications Manager/ Senior Manager	150,000	215,000
Marketing Manager/Snr Marketing Manager	150,000	190,000
Marketing / Communications Advisor	120,000	145,000

NOTE: Salary bands are inclusive of standard superannuation, pre bonus. The vast majority of firms offer bonuses, which are largely discretionary and based on a mix of individual, team and firm performance. Candidates prefer an indication of bonus potential during the offer process or prior to application.

DUBAI (AED)

JOB CLASSIFICATION	LOW (MONTHLY)	HIGH (MONTHLY)
BD Manager (inc sector, clients)	30,000	40,000
Senior BD Manager (inc sector, clients)	32,000	50,000
Marketing & Communications Manager/ Snr Manager	25,000	45,000

NOTE: It is market standard to provide bonuses as discretionary on top of this monthly salary, which are typically 1-3 months.

NEW ZEALAND (NZD)

JOB CLASSIFICATION	LOW (ANNUAL)	HIGH (ANNUAL)
BD Manager (inc sector, clients)	120,000	180,000
Senior BD Manager (inc sector, clients)	160,000	200,000
Communications Manager/Snr Manager	130,000	190,000
Marketing Manager/Snr Marketing Manager	130,000	190,000

NOTE: It is usual for firms to pay a discretionary bonus on top of salary and these ranges are quoted before Kiwi Saver.

HONG KONG (HKD)

JOB CLASSIFICATION	LOW (MONTHLY)	HIGH (MONTHLY)
BD Manager (inc sector, clients)	65,000	100,000
Senior BD Manager (inc sector, clients)	85,000	160,000
Communications Manager/Snr Manager	55,000	125,000

NOTE: These bandings are based on 12 months. A 13th month and/or bonus would need to be paid on top of these salaries to be in line with market. Where bonuses are discretionary, 1-3 months is most common, though we have seen up to 5 months.

SINGAPORE (SGD)

JOB CLASSIFICATION	LOW (MONTHLY)	HIGH (MONTHLY)
BD Manager (inc sector, clients)	12,000	16,000
Senior BD Manager (inc sector, clients)	16,000	22,000
Communications Manager/Snr Manager	10,000	16,000

NOTE: These bandings are based on 12 months. A 13th month and/or bonus would need to be paid on top of these salaries to be in line with market. Where bonuses are discretionary, 1-3 months is most common, though we have seen up to 5 months.

What advice can you give on the Advisor/Senior Advisor market?

We have included this range for the first time in a few years as we are often asked by our clients about this category of role. Though not our prime focus, we have been able to support some of our clients with placements at this level in Australia and have the intelligence to publish ranges here. However, our substantiated insights start from Manager level in other markets.

We are seeing the continued trend of quicker promotion to Manager than 5+ years ago in many markets, which means that in many cases the quoted ranges will secure someone with 2-4 years of experience, after this, they will be on the market for a Manager role.

What advice can you give on the BD Manager market?

In most markets, we have moved the bottom end of the range upwards by circa 10%. This remains a market where it is very competitive to secure the best talent, particularly in Sydney, Singapore and Hong Kong. The bottom end of the range reflects acquiring talent stepping up to Manager for the first time, the second half of the ranges are for experienced Managers. In Hong Kong and Australia in particular, the very top of the range overlaps into Senior Manager and, whilst there are enough instances to reflect this higher limit in the benchmarks, these are less common and often reflect specialist roles such as Client roles.

Firms of different types, shapes and sizes as well as most variations of this role (practice, sector, client, portfolio) are going to market with the same budget to acquire talent.

What advice can you give on the Senior BD Manager ranges?

We have moved the bottom end of this range up by circa 10%. Whilst we acknowledge there are instances of Senior Managers under this, we see them as reflective of either internal promotions, job title escalation or very small firms. The quoted ranges are a better indicator for budgets.

Unlike at BD Manager level, different types of law firm are often going to market with different budgets and ranges. Often leading brands with larger teams may go to market in the lower half of these ranges, seeking to rely on team culture, L&D opportunities, career opportunities, flexibility and other non-financial components to acquire talent. These non-financial benefits will attract some candidates and not others. Generalist and practice group focused Senior BD Managers are easier to attract in the lower half of the ranges.

The higher third of the ranges will look high to some firms, though there is healthy activity recruiting here. The higher end of the range will attract Client or Sector professionals, apply to global or regional roles, more people leadership experience, transformation and change experience and may also be most appropriate for program roles, or, where the Senior BD Managers is the most senior BDMC professional in the business. Firms with employer branding issues may also need to invest at the higher end of the range (and likely need the increased leadership experience to positively impact any issues).

How should I interpret the Communications and Marketing ranges and why are Manager and Senior Manager combined?

The bottom end was lifted in most markets. We quote the range as one as there is more job title diversity in Communications and Marketing, in part because the teams are smaller. However, typically, we would see the line between these levels, 2/3rds of the way into the salary ranges. Examples of professionals earning beyond this level, we view as 'Head of' level in the market.

In our experience and from the feedback from some Directors, the median level of investment is increasing within these ranges as the roles become more sophisticated and central in a firm.

The differential between BD and Comms salary potential in legal is decreasing, most quickly in Australia as compared to other markets considered in this report. This reflects the focus on market intelligence, data, digital, campaigns and a pivotal platform for internal and external communications.

Why do the BD Manager and Senior BD Manager ranges overlap in some markets and not others?

We see this happening mostly in Hong Kong & Australia which reflects a competitive talent market and diversity in the day-to-day of various roles, their activities and impact.

What's the best way to use these ranges when looking at a recruitment business case?

We would always suggest connecting with us about the specifics of your business case so that we can give bespoke advice about the profile of the individual you are likely to attract and acquire for a certain role at different points in these bands. As a general rule, a budget in the lower quartile of a band would attract someone from a smaller, domestic firm and/or someone stepping up into this role type/level for the first time and would not be realistic for many firms.

Why are these ranges sometimes higher than other large-scale industry salary data reports we may see?

Our data is a reflection of the market when people move jobs and is designed to give you a realistic figure for your business case to acquire talent for your team. As one Director said to us previously, “the market salary is what the last person who exited my team got in their new role”.

How do I interpret these figures if a job title doesn't neatly fit into one of your published ranges?

Job title disparity in the profession continues and this is unlikely to change. If your job title or that of a role you're hiring doesn't seem to fit into our ranges, contact us and we will work with you to navigate the scenario. The most notable two we see are “Lead” and “Associate Director”. Firms use these differently though most of the time they will span the top end of the quoted Senior Manager band as well as the “Head of” band.

How do I get salary data for Head of and/or Director/ C-level roles?

We have published a separate report for this level this year. This will be provided to those professionals at this stage of their career, and, HR/Talent Managers, and you can get in touch with us to request your copy.

How important is salary when candidates are considering a career move?

As we reported in our paper last year, “Future careers - the mindset of talent today’, 60% of the market believe their salary is market rate, with 25% perceiving they are below and 15% above market rate. Whilst we don't see many people moving for salary alone, our research and our experience of the market shows us that without an attractive salary increase available, many candidates will not listen to further details about the role.

ABOUT SELDON ROSSER

Seldon Rosser specialises in finding Senior BD & Marketing Communications leaders for professional service firms across the APAC & ME regions. With a proven robust and rigorous search campaign process and an unrivalled network of candidates, we are perfectly positioned to present clients with shortlists of the best talent available in their chosen markets.

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