



Canadian Corporate Counsel Association  
Association canadienne des conseillers  
et conseillères juridiques d'entreprise

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# CCCA | Mondag

## 2025 Canadian In-House Counsel Report

Unparalleled Insights into Canada's In-House Profession

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# INTRODUCTION

The Canadian Corporate Counsel Association (CCCA) and Mondaq are delighted to present the results of our fourth annual Canadian In-House Counsel Survey. Based on over 600 responses from across the country and across all job levels, this report provides Canadian in-house counsel and the legal profession with unrivalled insight into the key questions and issues that are impacting individual counsel and legal departments today. Designed in partnership with an advisory board composed of eminent in-house counsel, this report provides an up-to-date analysis of the hot button issues and 2025 outlook for the Canadian in-house profession.

We'd like to thank the Canadian in-house community for their terrific support of our survey, which has established itself as the definitive annual report into the Canadian-in house profession, as well as our advisory board members for their sage counsel.

Thank you also to our report sponsor, Lawyers Financial, for enabling us to further amplify the survey findings and analysis.



**Alexandra Chyczij**  
Executive Director  
CCCA



**Tim Harty**  
CEO  
Mondaq



## About the CCCA

The CCCA is the leader and voice for Canadian in-house counsel. Founded in 1988 as a forum of the Canadian Bar Association, we represent over 5,000 in-house counsel from every province and territory, and sector and industry, making us the most inclusive and representative professional association for in-house counsel in Canada. Our members are lawyers working for public and private companies, not-for-profits, associations, government and regulatory boards, Crown corporations, municipalities, hospitals, postsecondary institutions and school boards.



## About Mondaq

Mondaq is a leading global provider of AI-enabled content marketing, analytics and data solutions for professional services firms and helps its over 20 million readers worldwide to find answers to legal, tax and compliance questions. Mondaq has over 2 million readers in Canada, including the majority of Canadian in-house counsel and executives from thousands of Canadian organizations .



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# METHODOLOGY

In September 2024, the CCCA and Mondaq jointly launched the fourth annual Canadian In-House Counsel Survey with the aim of providing unrivalled insights into the in-house counsel profession in Canada. This survey stands out as the most comprehensive and representative examination of the state of in-house legal departments in the country.

607 respondents completed an online survey between September and December 2024. The survey included 34 questions covering organization and legal department activity, budgets and investment, outsourcing, technology, innovation, as well as priorities, challenges and other people-focused questions. Following the main questionnaire, a voluntary self-identification section consisting of 8 questions was included, garnering responses from over two-thirds of the participants.

To ensure rigorous oversight and authoritative input, the survey was developed in partnership with our survey Advisory Board, which includes eminent Canadian in-house counsel.

## Advisory Board



**Steve Smyth**  
Vice President, Corporate Development and GC  
Trotter & Morton



**Ranj Sangra**  
CCCA President & Associate General Counsel  
Ballard Power Systems



**Heidi Schedler**  
Solicitor  
Nova Scotia Department of Justice



**Dev Jagdev**  
Senior Legal Counsel  
Rogers Communications

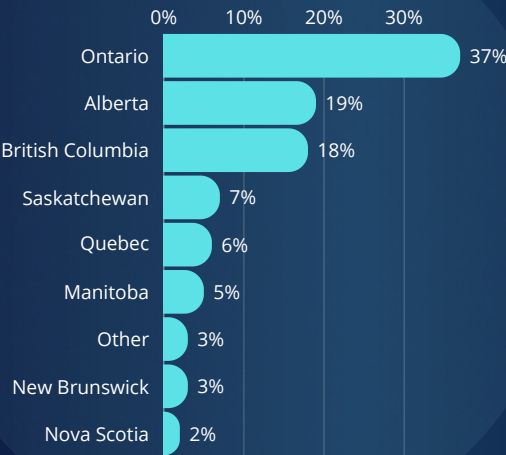
# PARTICIPANT PROFILE

The survey successfully obtained a representative view, with notable characteristics in participant roles and organizational affiliations:

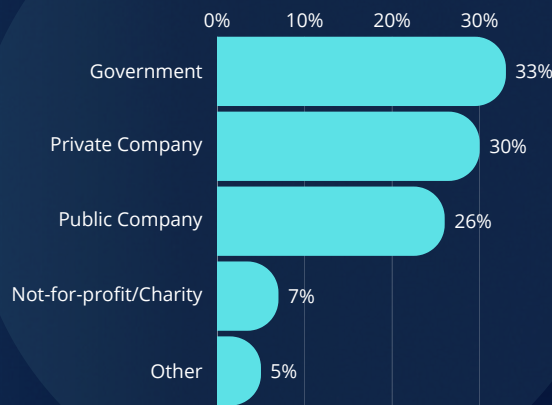
- Representation from across Canada: British Columbia (18%); Alberta (19%); Saskatchewan (7%); Manitoba (5%); Ontario (37%); Quebec (6%); New Brunswick (3%); Nova Scotia (2%).
- Diverse job-level representation across legal departments included responses from CLOs/GCs (27%), EVP Legal/VP Legal (3%) Associate GCs (7%), Senior Counsel (19%), Counsel (29%) and Directors of Legal Services/Legal Managers (11%).
- Excellent response levels from across various sectors, with 26% from public companies, 30% from private companies, 33% from government organizations and 7% from not-for-profits.
- Well balanced distribution based on organizational size, with 34.5% of responses from organizations with up to 500 employees, 34.5% with 501 to 5000 employees, and 31% with 5001+ staff.

For further details on survey respondent specifics, refer to the Participant Profile charts to the right.

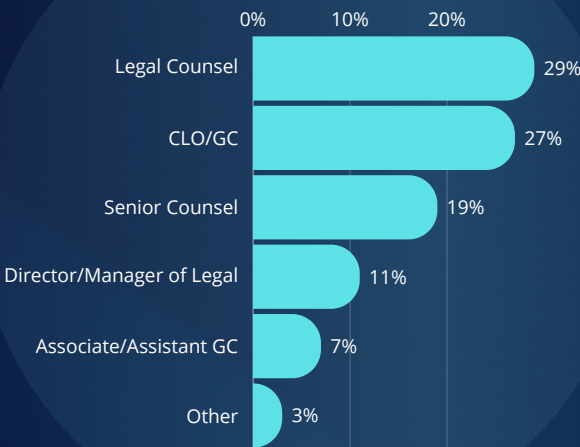
### Location



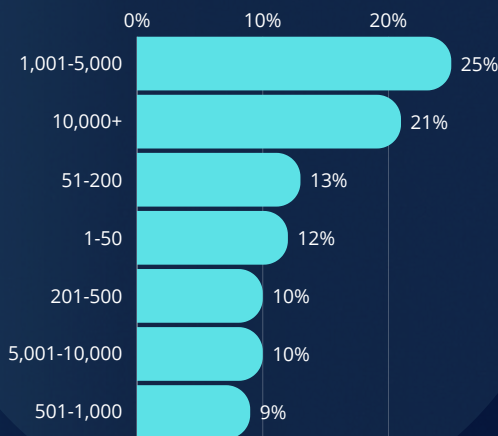
### Organization Type



### Job Role



### Organization Size by Employees





# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Against the continued backdrop of geopolitical upheaval and economic uncertainty abroad and closer to home, the CCCA & Mondaq Canadian In-House Counsel Survey seeks to shine a light on the state of Canada's in-house legal departments and profession.

The extensive questionnaire and widespread survey participation, provides unrivalled insight into legal departments' budgets, investment, staffing, activities, insourcing and sourcing focus; reveals the biggest challenges and priorities across varying in-house job levels; and provides insights into what makes a great in-house lawyer in 2025.

- **Hybrid working patterns firming up in response to employee engagement issues** – Level with the previous year, 82% of legal departments work on a hybrid basis but the fast-rising trend towards a minimum of three mandated office days again rose to 48% of organizations. Those that do not mandate any office days shrank 5% to less than one in five. Two-thirds of organizations rate employee engagement as the most challenging aspect – slightly up on last year.

- **Continued growth in demand for in-house services with organizations increasingly looking to in-house counsel for business strategy and advice** - There are predicted rises in activity across a wide spread of business areas, building on broadly similar rises in previous years: Data Privacy (+50%), Risk & Compliance (+53%), Contract Management (+50%) and Business Strategy & Advice (+40%, up by a quarter on 2024).

- **Technology and insourcing prioritized to meet increased demand for legal services** – Legal technology is the fastest-rising investment priority, followed by investment in legal department staff. Higher levels of investment in both technology and people will be somewhat offset by less growth in spend on external counsel and alternative legal solution provider spend in 2025.

- **Well defined 'Big 5' buy-side drivers for procuring outside legal services** – The 'Big 5' – the same buy-side criteria as last year and all rated as important or very important by over 90% of respondents – are composed of legal expertise, practical advice, client service, understanding of the client's business and value for money.

- **In-house counsel continue to shoulder significant accountabilities beyond their legal roles** - Compliance is by far the most common (47%) suggesting it is now widely regarded as integral to the legal function. Ethics responsibilities and Company Secretarial duties are the next most common, each being reported by around a quarter of respondents.

- **Work-related stress and anxiety levels remain very high** – Around half of the profession (47%) again reported increased work-related stress and anxiety over the previous year. The proportion reporting a decrease dwindled by a fifth and now stands at only 1 in 12, indicating a potentially acute need for a review of work patterns and the introduction of employee wellness programs.

- **Stubborn lack of focus on Equality, Diversity & Inclusion in legal departments** – As in 2024, 39% of Canadian legal departments do not consider ED&I to be a priority within their organization. The lack of priority was reported strongly at senior levels, by 44% of CLOs/GCs and may give rise to concerns around the composition of legal teams, as well as the working experience and career prospects for employees from different backgrounds.

- **Top in-house priorities and biggest challenges** – Volume of work/managing workload remains the greatest challenge for in-house counsel at every level. AI is a major challenge in terms of both the implementation of generative AI and the rapidity of change around AI regulation. In terms of highest priorities, there is a much wider spread of priorities across the in-house profession, although two topics rise to the top – managing risk, and improving processes and efficiencies.

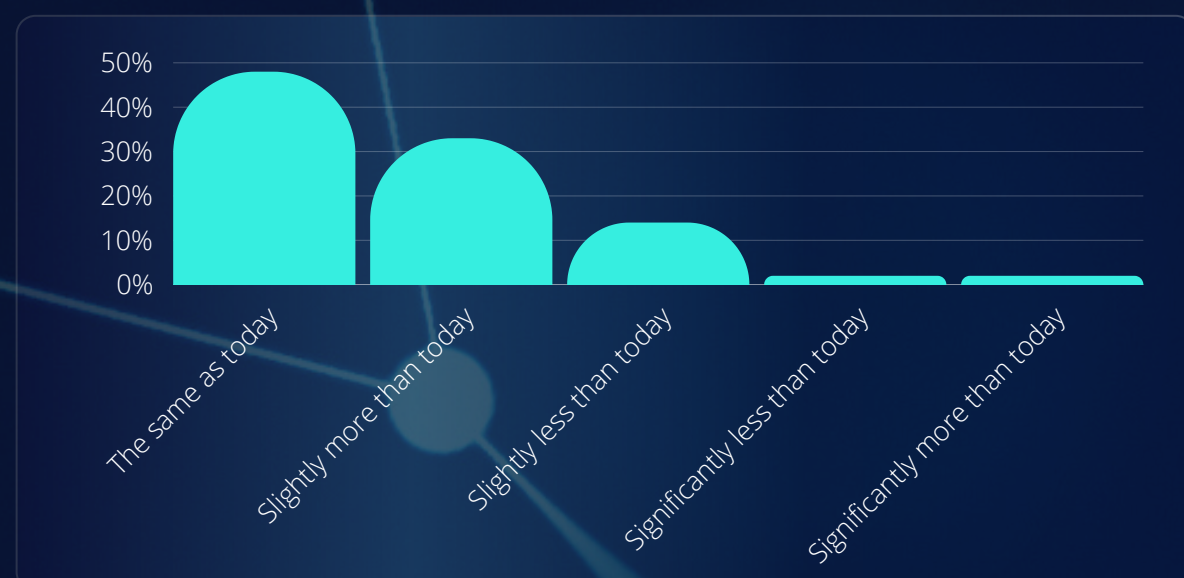
- **What makes a great in-house lawyer in 2025?** The three most important skills required for an effective in-house lawyer today are strongly highlighted as communication, followed by business understanding and flexibility/adaptability, although there are differences across job levels as to the top skill. These eminently transferable characteristics may go some way to explain a slight rise in numbers of those moving out of legal into wider business roles, most commonly within HR or Compliance.



# BUDGETS & INVESTMENT PRIORITIES

Around half of all organizations (48%) expect their in-house legal department budget to remain the same in 2025, while more than a third (35%) expect their budget to grow. There is a reduction in the number of organizations expecting their budgets to grow (from 40% in 2023, to 38% in 2024, to this year's 35%). 16% of organizations expect their budgets to decline in 2025, the same as last year.

**Expected size of the total in-house legal department budget over the next year:**



Public companies are experiencing the least budget growth. Here, only 30% expect their budgets to rise. That figure is a third higher at 41% among privately owned companies. This is mirrored in the figures for those expecting their budget to be cut – just 13% of private companies compared with 28% of public companies. 33% of government organizations are looking at an increase in 2025 against 13% expecting less budget.

As to the responsibilities and demands on in-house legal teams, there are predicted rises in activity across a wide spread of business areas, building on similar rises in previous years. 50% of respondents expect in-house activity in Data Privacy to increase. This is lower than the previous year (57%) but demand remains strong. There are correspondingly large rises in demand across these areas:

**Risk & Compliance - 53% (up from 46%)**

**Contract Management - 50% (up from 43%)**

**Business Strategy & Advice - 40% (up from 33%)**

There is little evidence of expected decreases in any area of activity for in-house legal resources as organizations continue to look to their legal departments to manage regulatory risk and compliance, and increasingly to act as business partners to help them drive growth. This level of demand may be a main driver of the expected investment growth in both technology and in-house staffing.

Indeed, technology is the clear budget winner for the coming year, holding firm as investment growth for in-house staffing is beginning to pull back. Overall, 46% of organizations plan to invest more in legal tech in 2025 - slightly up on last year's 45%. Growth expectations are highest in private companies, where 55% will increase their technology budget. Investment in legal technology is now seen as a priority by 53% of organizations, a remarkable 10 percentage points up on last year.

*Investment in legal technology is now seen as a priority by 53% of organizations*

Appetite for increased investment in in-house staffing has slightly weakened for this year. 38% of organizations currently expect to invest more in staffing, down from 45% on the previous year. There has also been a near-doubling to 9% of organizations that expect to reduce spending on in-house staff. Public companies will see the least growth (28% spending more vs. 15% less) and private companies the most (43% more vs. 6% less).

Nonetheless, there will still be significant growth in legal department headcount in 2025 – an overall trend that has now been sustained for four years, with more than a quarter of organizations (26%) expecting their departments to increase in size in the coming year. These figures greatly exceed the proportion that expect to reduce the size of their in-house legal team, which stands at 6% overall. But that figure has doubled from 3% to 6% over last year, so this is an area to watch.

The contrast between expectations of growth versus reduction in headcount is greatest among privately owned businesses. Here, six times the number of respondents (30%) plan to grow against 5% that expect headcount reduction. Public companies are the most cautious: just 23% expecting to grow against 8% predicting to shrink their legal team size in 2025. In the government sector 26% expect an increase against 7% a reduction in team size.

*Spend on outside counsel appears to be increasingly challenged in 2025*

Spend on outside counsel appears to be increasingly challenged in 2025. While 34% of organizations intend to spend more on outside counsel, 22% are expecting a reduction in spend, a big increase on last year's 17%. The downward pressure on outside counsel spend is driven primarily by public companies, with 32% of public companies expecting to spend less on outside counsel compared with 28% spending more. In contrast, private companies are likely to see more investment in outside counsel, with 41% expecting to increase spend on outside counsel, although 21% expect to decrease their spend in 2025 (compared with just 9% last year). 34% of government organizations expect to spend more and 16% less on outside counsel, broadly similar to last year.

Expenditure on Alternative Legal Service Providers (ALSPs) edges higher with 15% now expecting to increase spend – half as many again as four years ago. This is highest in private companies (17%) and public companies (16%). However, 12% of organizations expect to spend less on ALSPs.

So, while the demand for in-house services continues to increase, organizations aim to meet this demand through the additional investment and priority given to both technology and people, somewhat offset by lower growth in expenditure on outside counsel.



Outside Counsel

As seen in the 2024 report, there continues to be a narrow range between those organizations expecting to outsource more work to outside counsel, versus those expecting to outsource less, although there is an increase in those organizations expecting to outsource more work to outside counsel. 27% of legal departments are expecting to outsource more work to outside counsel in the next 12 months (compared to 23% in 2024 and 22% in 2023) and 20% expect to outsource less work (the same as in 2024 and compared to 22% in 2023).

Like last year, this is most pronounced in public companies, with just 21% expecting to send more work to outside counsel and 22% expecting to send less. Private companies are planning to send more work to outside counsel (33%) rather than less (24%), as are government organizations .

The following five factors are rated as important or very important:



When selecting to instruct outside counsel, the ‘Big Five’ buying criteria are consistent with previous surveys: legal expertise (99% consider important or very important), practical advice (97%), client service (95%), understanding the client’s business (94%) and value for money (91%). All five criteria increased in importance to buyers over last year.

Focus on buying criteria considered ‘very important’, there are significant 12% gains for both legal expertise and practical advice

But there are some interesting shifts in buyers’ priorities. Over the past four years of this survey, the factors showing the strongest and most consistent growth in importance are ‘understanding of the business’ and ‘value for money’.

Focus on buying criteria considered ‘very important’, there are significant 12% gains for both legal expertise and practical advice – each being cited by 12% more respondents than last year. Client service also jumped into third place– being rated as very important by two-thirds of those surveyed – slightly ahead of understanding the client’s business.

Moreover, the gap is widening between the Big Five buy-side criteria and the next three. The importance of brand and reputation is holding. But existing senior-level relationships are reducing in importance – along with outside counsel’s investment in technology and innovation. The lower level of importance placed on existing relationships and the perceived brand and reputation of the law firm should motivate incumbent firms and fee earners to ensure the higher scoring buy-side value drivers are also addressed. 28% of organizations now rate Diversity and Inclusion initiatives as an important or very important selection criteria, up from 26% in 2024.

Work areas most often outsourced:



The types of work most likely to be outsourced are very similar to previous years. They are centered around areas where there are shortfalls in in-house capabilities and/or capacity.

72% of legal departments are likely to seek expert advice in areas new to them, 65% look for assistance with litigation, 63% of organizations will look outside for the legal assurance, opinion or coverage of external counsel. Over half of organizations (55%) outsource when there is insufficient internal capacity.

Public companies lean towards outsourcing more transactional work, private companies more towards litigation. Government tends to look for support with short-timeframe work.

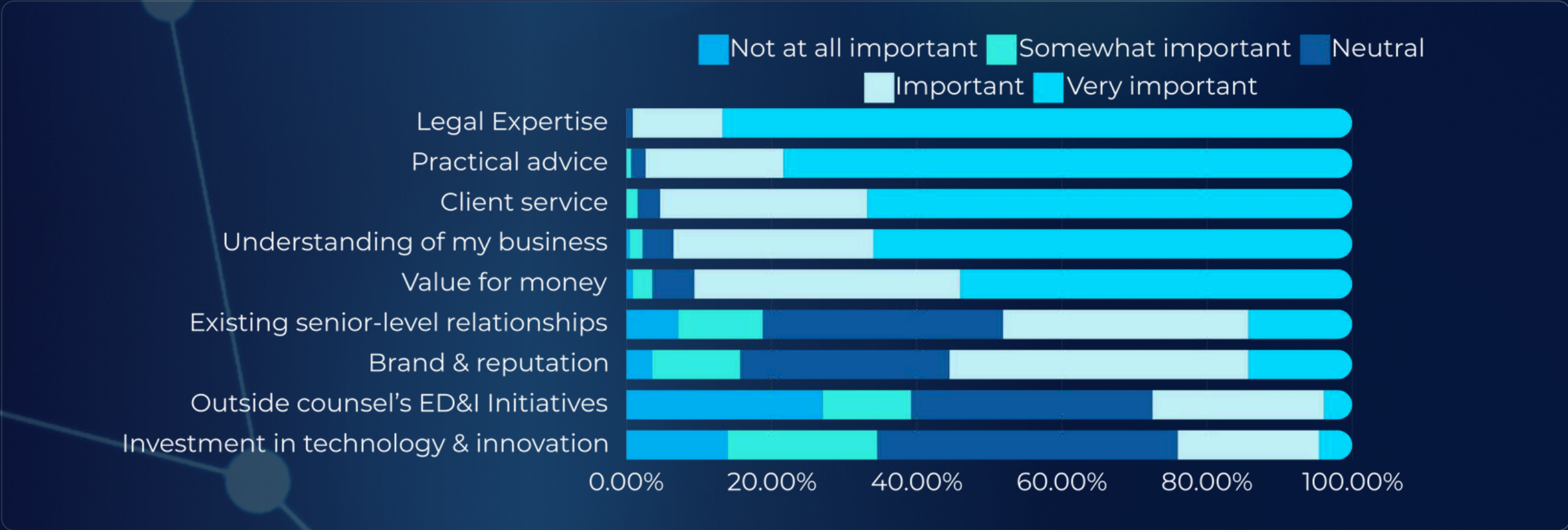
Significantly more inside counsel deem the below are to be important or very important:





# OUTSOURCING CONTINUED

How important are the following factors when selecting outside counsel:



## Other outsourcing

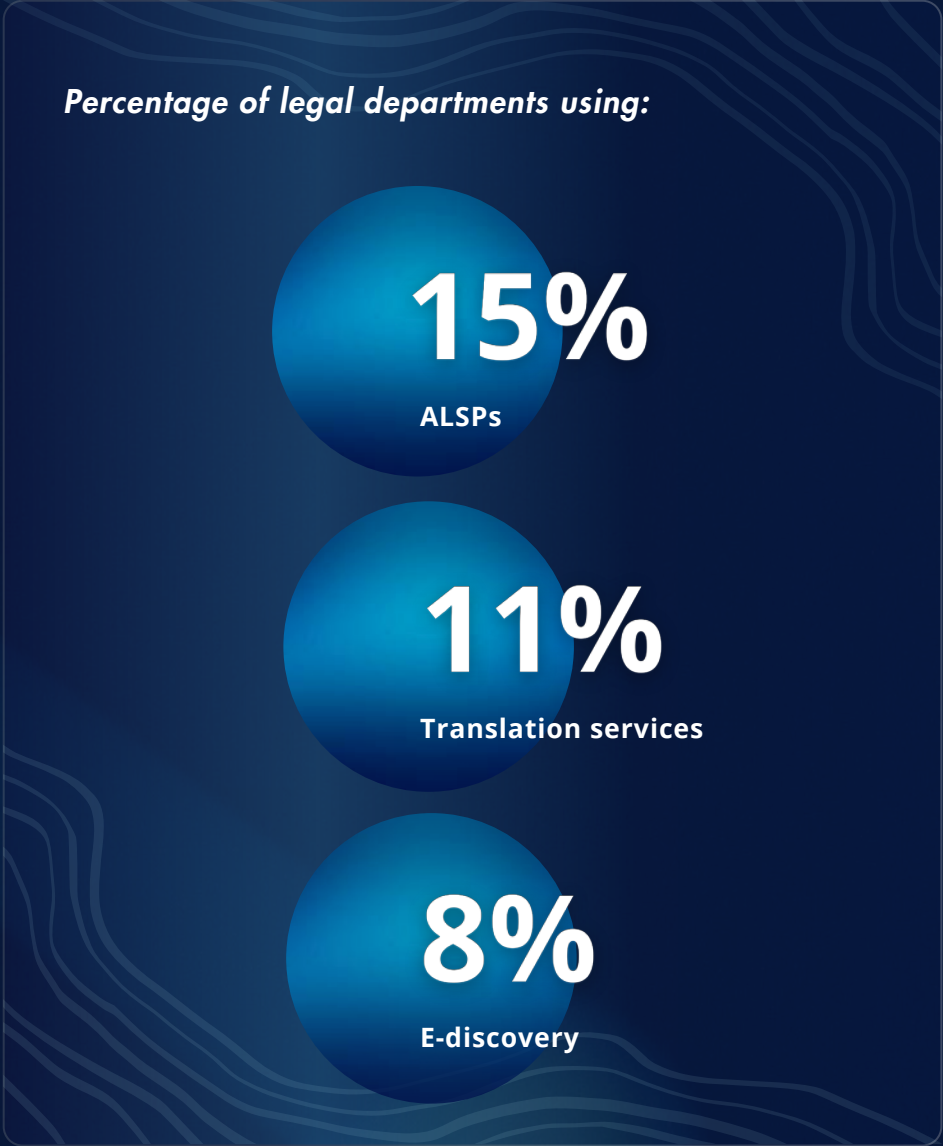
After two years of decline, there is an increase in the number of organizations using Alternative Legal Service Providers (ALSPs) – 15% of legal departments outsource work to ALSPs (up from 13% in 2024). The increase in use of ALSPs is driven by public companies, and mirrored by an increase in those expecting to spend more on ALSPs in the next year. The use of ALSPs is highest in public companies, which is substantially up from 17% in the prior year and lowest in government organizations at 8%. A fifth of private companies use ALSPs, which is also up on prior year. That said, the overall landscape for use of ALSPs is more mixed. 12% of respondents now expect to reduce their spend with ALSPs, rising from 10% last year.

The figures for offshoring and onshoring outsourced work are very similar to last year. Around a third (31%) sending work offshore, while 95% onshore their outsourced work. Public companies are most likely to send work offshore work (53%). Government organizations are least likely to do so (9%).

## When outsourcing:



After two years of decline, there is an increase in the number of organizations using Alternative Legal Service Providers





## Innovation

More than half of respondents (54%) rated innovation as a priority in legal and regulatory risk management. This is the same figure as 2024, indicating a strong commitment to innovating, that will be sustained for the coming year. The picture is broadly the same across all types of organizations, with slightly more focus among public and privately-owned companies.

*AI is the biggest area for innovation across legal departments*

Unsurprisingly, given the recent developments in generative artificial intelligence (AI), AI is the biggest area for innovation across legal departments overall, followed by contract and document management. Many respondents refer to the use of technology to improve efficiencies and automate routine functions and processes.

But the main areas of innovation focus are more nuanced again between government organizations and companies. For private and public companies, AI takes a clear lead over contract management as the main innovation priority. But among governmental organizations AI falls into 2nd place behind document management.

*The single biggest area of innovation in the legal department is:*



## Technology

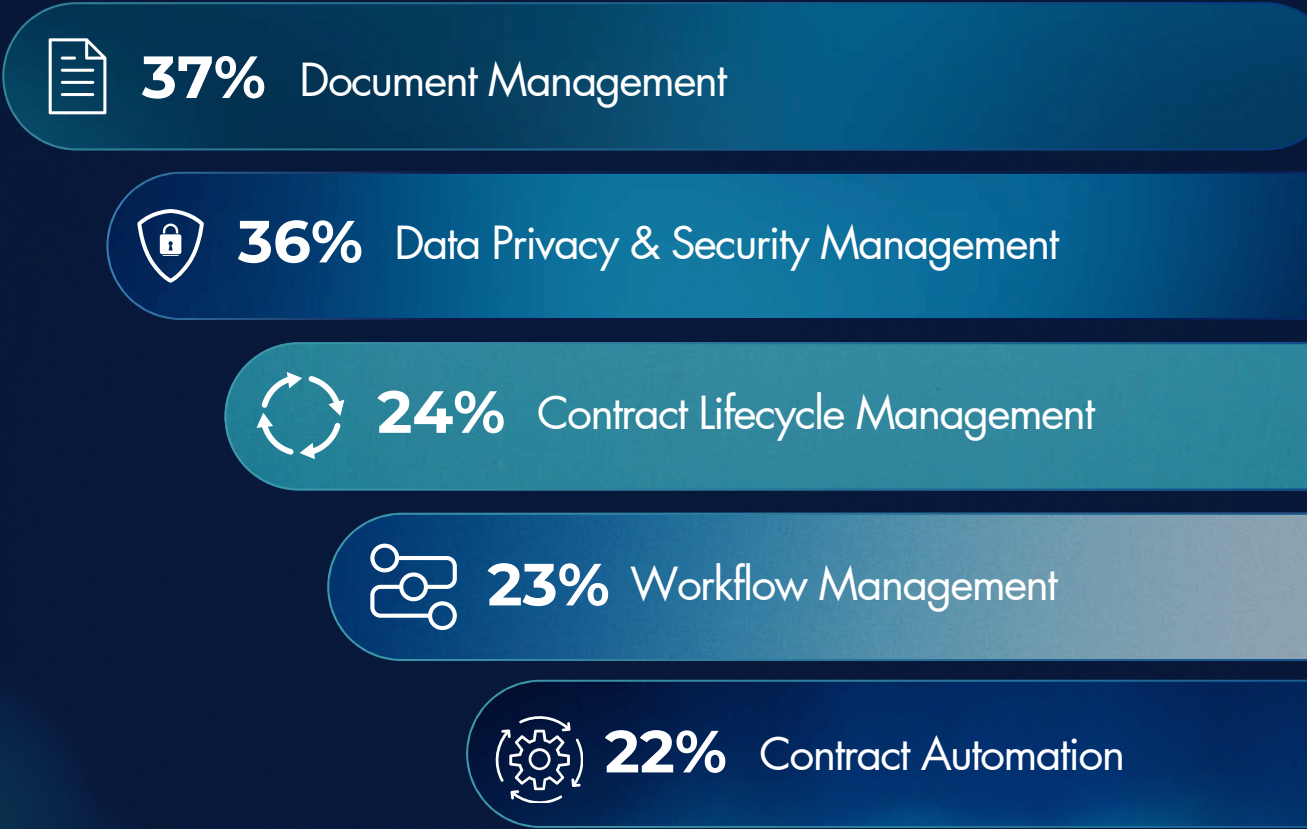
There is a big increase in the number of legal departments treating investment in legal department technology as a priority. 53% (versus 43% in the 2024 survey) of organizations are prioritizing investment in legal department technology. Private companies lead the field in making technology a priority with 55% of respondents expecting investment growth, followed by public companies at 48%.

In line with the prioritization of tech investment, 46% of organizations plan to invest more in legal department technology in 2025, meaning technology is now the largest area for in-house spend growth – outstripping even investment in in-house staffing, with which it had parity in last year's survey (both at 45%). This continues a trend of incremental growth in legal technology spend over the past four years.

*46% of organizations plan to invest more in legal department technology in 2025*

When it comes to where the spend will be focused, there is a broadly similar landscape to last year. Document Management (37%) and Data Privacy & Security Management (36%) are again identified as the top two technology spend priorities, followed by Contract Lifecycle Management (24%), Workflow Management (23%) and Contract Automation (22%). There has been a noticeable year-on-year rise in the number of legal departments planning to invest more in Contract Automation and Contract Lifecycle Management.

*Number of organizations expecting to invest more in these technologies:*



The barriers to technology investment and adoption remain broadly the same, but with a marked rise in data privacy concerns for the second year running. In 2023 only 1-in-4 respondents gave Data Privacy as a concern. But that figure has risen by half as much again in the past two years. 38% of organizations now place data privacy as their third highest technology challenge – level with Implementation Risk.

Cost remains by far the greatest challenge, cited more than three-quarters of those surveyed (78%) – one percentage point higher than last year. Further back in second place, according to 46% of respondents, the next most challenging barrier is a lack of integration with existing legal department technologies.

These figures suggest that technology providers may do well to focus on solutions that more cost-effectively support integration and alleviate growing concerns over data privacy.



# PRIORITIES & CHALLENGES

In 2025, there are two standout challenges to the in-house legal profession. Firstly, it's clear that developments in AI and their impact on legal departments and businesses, both from an implementation and from a regulatory perspective, is significant. Second, the volume of work and managing workloads continue to be a huge challenge to the profession.

From the perspective of top priorities across all job levels, there is a much wider spread of priorities across the Canadian in-house profession, although two topics rise to the top – managing risk and improving processes and efficiencies.

*Volume of work and managing workload remains the greatest challenge facing legal teams at every level*

## Challenges

Volume of work and managing workloads remains the greatest challenge facing legal teams at every level – the same as last year. There is no question that AI is also soaring as a major issue for legal departments. There are two aspects to this: the impact of advances in generative AI, but also the rapidity of developments in regulating AI. The pace of change in the field may itself be a factor. AI first emerged as a challenge only as recently as 2024. It now stands as the 2nd most-mentioned challenge across all roles – edging regulatory risk and compliance down to 3rd place.

But the emphases vary significantly between different job levels within legal departments.

● **CLOs and GCs:** CLOs and GCs are predominantly expressing concerns over managing risk in the face of “demands for increasing use of technology and AI” – and about “increased use of AI without proper controls” over data and privacy.

● **Legal Counsel and Senior Counsel:** Challenges around AI are also prominent among Legal Counsels and Senior Counsels. But they are considerably behind both workload / volume-of-work concerns and privacy-related matters.

● **Directors and Managers:** However, for Legal Directors / Managers it is abundantly clear that the greatest challenges are centered around regulation and compliance. This is driven by increasing and changing requirements – and the need to manage compliance against that constantly shifting landscape. Concerns over workload and litigation are also high on the agenda at this level.

From an organizational perspective, all boards continue to face regulatory change and compliance as their main challenge, though less firmly so than in prior years. AI continues to rise in prominence, with Litigation making up the top three issue areas. But that picture is more nuanced when comparing private and public companies. The boards of public companies are looking at cybersecurity as a major challenge, along with privacy. But there is scant reference to AI. This may imply a disconnect on this issue between CLOs/GCs and the board within public companies. In the private sector, there is more frequent mention at board level of the challenge of AI, while regulatory risk and compliance remains the primary concern.

While AI has captured the minds of in-house legal teams, workload challenges – and the concomitant impact on employee wellbeing and retention – could well be the metaphorical elephant in the room.

*The boards of public companies are looking at cybersecurity as a major challenge, along with privacy*

**The greatest legal challenge I expect to face in 2025 is (CLOs/GCs)**

privacy data Increasing regulatory  
organization risks regulation  
legal Compliance  
Managing AI work change  
Data volume privacy  
business management  
Volume work capacity demands

**The greatest legal challenge I expect to face in 2025 is (senior counsel; legal counsel):**

Increased workload Learning new  
Adapting new change areas business  
Compliance Managing technology costs  
increase legal resources  
budget AI work Balancing  
staffing privacy Workload risks  
Volume work priorities government  
litigation matters Increased litigation







# EQUALITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

Almost four out of ten Canadian legal departments do not consider Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (ED&I) to be a priority within their organization. The figure is level with the 2024 report.

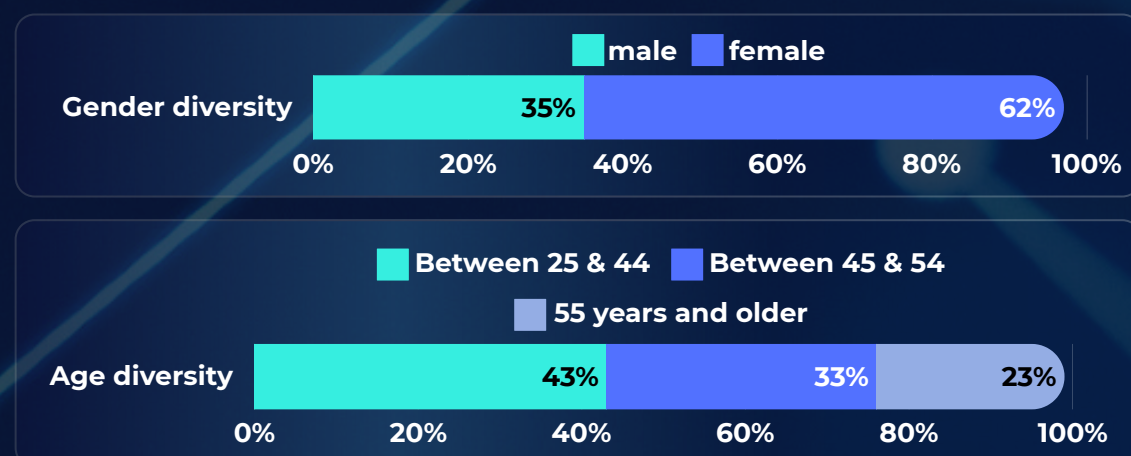
The lack of priority was reported strongly at senior levels, by 44% of CLOs/GCs. Although this is down 1% from last year's survey, it may give rise to concerns around the composition of legal teams, as well as the working experience and career prospects for employees from different backgrounds.

*Almost four out of ten Canadian legal departments do not consider Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (ED&I) to be a priority within their organization*

There remains variation between the provinces, but the headline is that ED&I is noticeably less of a priority across some provinces. The sharpest fall was in British Columbia, which reported a drop of 10 percentage points – falling from almost 3/4 of legal departments making ED&I a priority last year to 62% today. This is the same proportion as Ontario, which posted just a 1% drop from 2024. Alberta respondents showed a drop – 9% lower than last year at 58%. Manitoba was alone in recording a modest 1% rise. But it remains the only province, with a large enough sample size, where over half of legal departments (55%) do not deem ED&I to be a priority for them.

Organization size is a clear determining factor, with large organizations of 5,000+ staff outpacing smaller operations of up to 500 employees. In fact, substantially more large organizations (75%) make ED&I a priority than their smaller counterparts at 44%. The gap widened over the last twelve months, rising 5 percentage points for the former and falling from 55% to now fewer than half of small organizations.

**Survey response diversity data based on voluntary self-identification questions:**

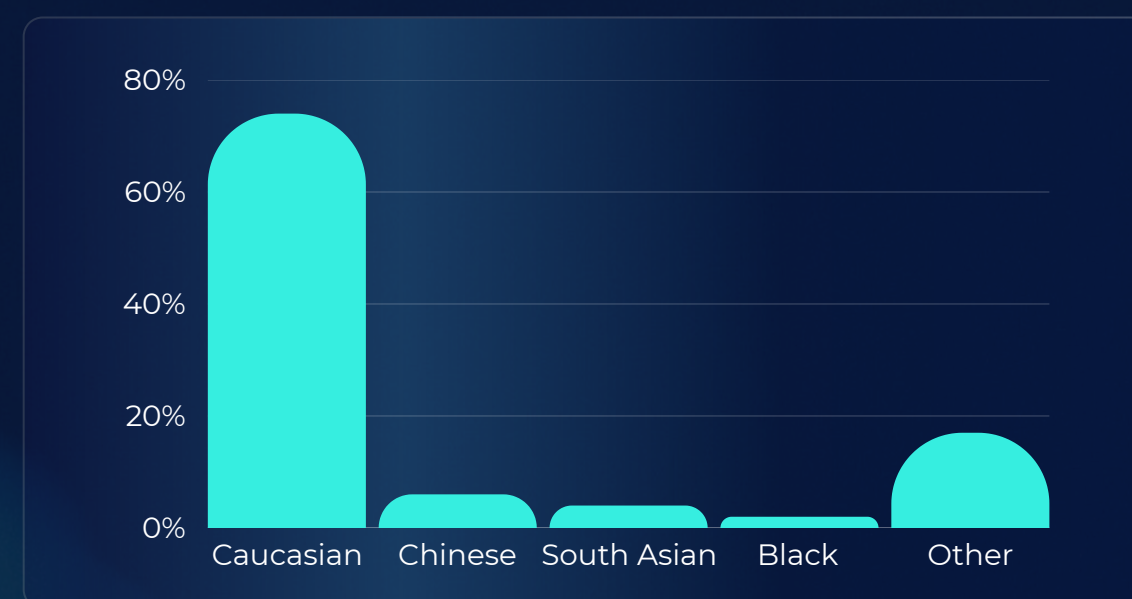


*ED&I is noticeably less of a priority across some provinces. The sharpest fall was in British Columbia, which reported a drop of 10 percentage points*

But the likely strongest driver of priority is the size of the legal department itself. Results mirror the trend for organizations as a whole, with large organizations dominating the numbers. 85% of legal teams with more than 30 staff make ED&I a priority. For smaller departments of 10-30 staff, the figure is rather lower at around two-thirds (66%) – and a still smaller proportion for small teams of up to ten people. Given the contrast between results for large and small operations, more understanding may be needed over differences in structure and methods, internal culture or other factors that drive the setting of priorities.

Focusing on diversity data, half of respondents completed the survey's voluntary self-identification section. Of these responses 62% identified as female, 36% male. People who identify as either two-spirit or non-binary were both represented in the remaining 2% – along with those who prefer not to say.

**Race/ ethnicity of respondents:**



There is also diversity from an age perspective, with the figures showing a balance across age-ranges. Specifically, the splits are 43% age 25-44, 33% age 45-54, 23% age 55 and over.

There is substantially lower diversity in terms of race and ethnicity with almost three-quarters (74%) identifying as Caucasian. A tenth of respondents identified as Chinese (6%) and South Asian (4%), followed by Indigenous North American (3%) and Black (2%) respondents.



# PEOPLE & TALENT

Based on the high level of survey participation, we are able to examine a significant number of responses across all job levels, helping us to deliver a view from the top as well as from middle and junior in-house legal roles.

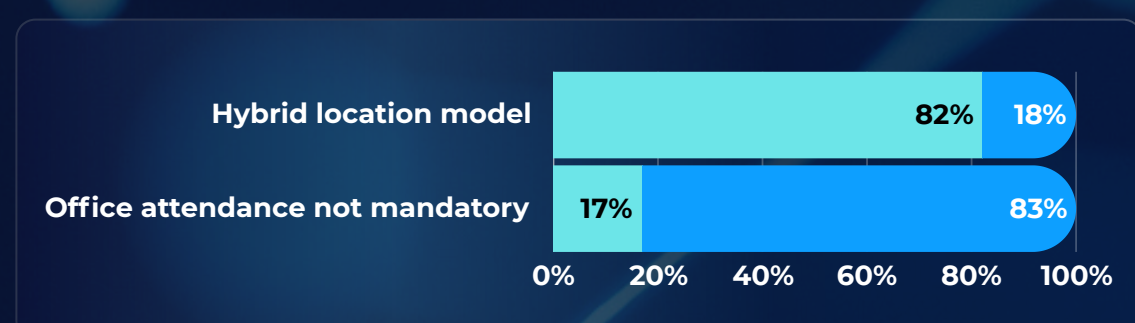
## Workplace

The survey shows that 82% of Canadian in-house legal departments are operating a hybrid location model (level with 2024), although there are big differences depending on the type of organisation. 82% of public companies, 71% of private companies and 88% of government organizations operate a hybrid policy.

While hybrid is still far and away the most common staffing model, there is a shift towards more office-days being mandated as organizations expect their employees to spend more time in the office than last year. Approaching half the organizations surveyed (48%) now mandate 3 or more office days per week. This is a fifth more than last year, when the 3-day pattern was also the largest riser. The preference is strongest within public companies, where 55% mandate 3 days. More mandated office days are also more prevalent in large organizations of 5000+ employees (51%) than in smaller organizations up to 500 staff (46%). There is a distinct fall from 21% to 17% of organizations that do not mandate any office days in 2025.

These figures may to some extent reflect a response to the most common challenges of hybrid working. Fully two-thirds of organizations (67%) rate employee engagement as the most challenging aspect – a slight rise from the 2024 report. A third also indicate some challenges around employee retention, which is 10% higher than last year.

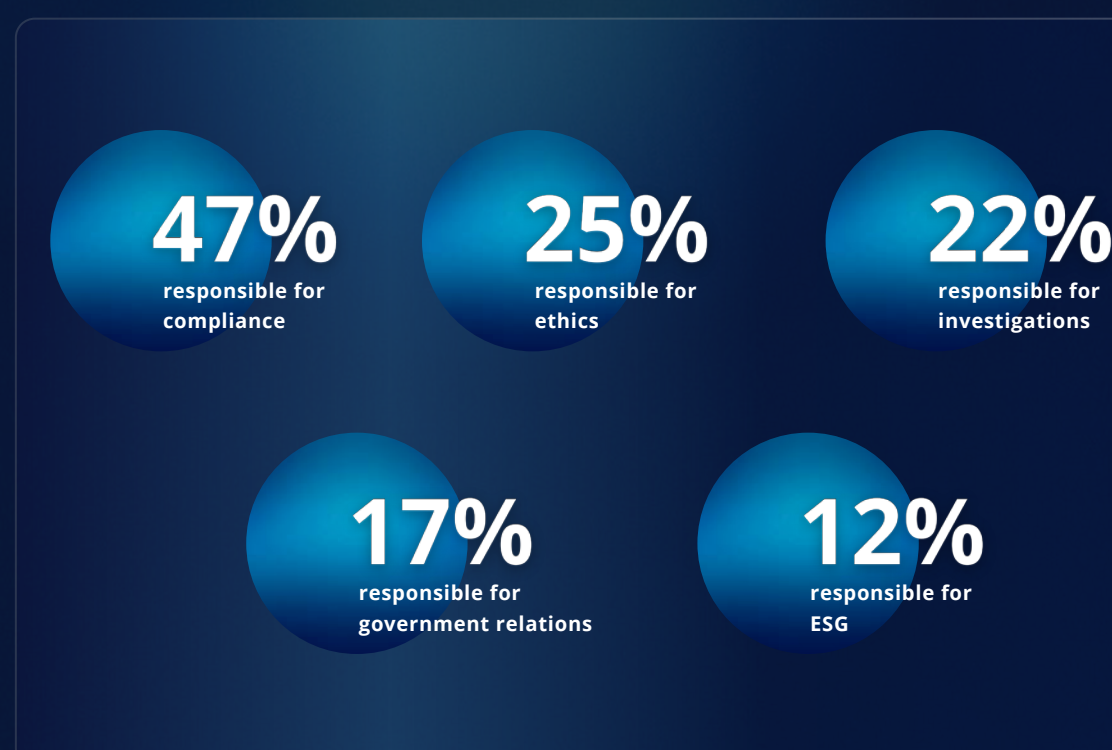
## Remote/hybrid working arrangements:



## Responsibilities

In-house counsel continue to carry significant accountabilities beyond their legal responsibilities. Looking across the range of non-core legal duties, the figures are broadly constant from year to year. Compliance is by far the most common extra responsibility. 47% gave this as an answer – almost exactly the same as last year, following slight uplifts in both 2022 and 2023. This is highest in private companies (61%) but also the most commonly cited additional responsibility in public companies (49%) and government (40%) and suggests that compliance is now widely regarded as integral to the legal function. As before, a substantial proportion (25%) also still carry ethics responsibilities. Almost a quarter (24%) of respondents said they carry company secretarial duties (39% in private companies and 28% in public companies). There is a marginal rise in responsibility for investigations (22%), counter-balanced by a slight fall in those involved in government relations (17%). The proportion of those picking up ESG-related duties has dropped to 12% (from 14% in 2024), although is higher in public and private companies at 16%.

## In-house personnel accountability beyond legal:



The sustained burden of extra accountabilities has been a consistent pattern for the past four years – and is allied with a growing demand for in-house services. Taken together, these are likely to be significant factors driving the continued investment growth into legal department headcount (27% of respondents expect to see their in-house legal team grow in 2025, with just 6% expecting to reduce in size).

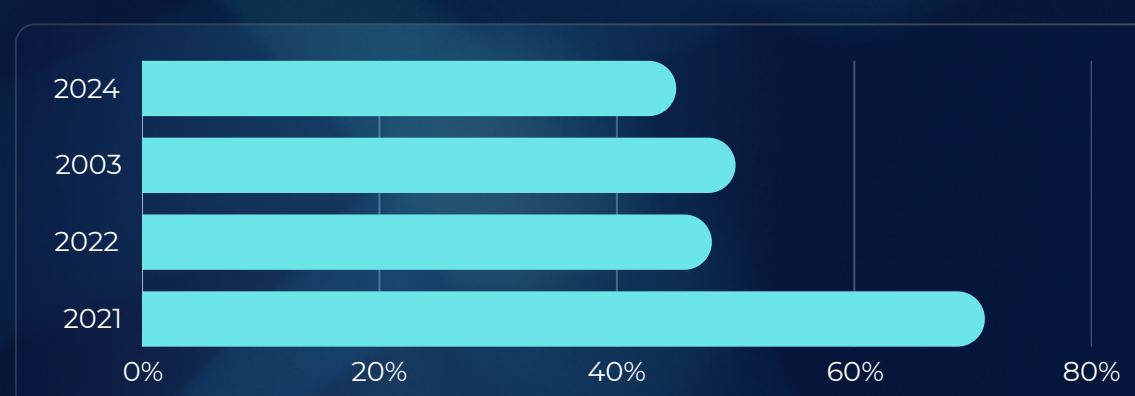
These additional responsibilities, coupled with the extra demand for in-house services are also likely to be significant contributing factors to the continued increase in work-related anxiety and stress levels. Nearly half of respondents (47%, down from 50% in 2024) reported an increase in work-related stress and anxiety, while the number reporting a decrease is down from 1-in-10 last year to just 8% today.

Stress is most prevalent within public companies, where the proportion experienced increased levels peaks at 51%, but increases are high throughout, with private companies at 49%, government at 40% and not-for-profit at 28%. Highest increases are reported by Associate/Assistant GCs (53%), Directors of Legal Services / Legal Manager (51%) and CLOs / GCs (46%). 47% of staff within large organizations (5000+ staff) report heightened levels of anxiety and stress. This is notably higher than the 40% within smaller organizations (up to 500 staff).

The figures reinforce that work-related stress and anxiety in legal teams remain very high. This may indicate a potentially acute need for employee wellness programs and, consequently, department and human resources leaders should consider implementation of staff support programs.

## Reported increase in work-related stress and anxiety

*It is important to note the small increase is on an already highly stressed base*





# PEOPLE & TALENT CONTINUED

## Skills & Opportunities

The skills deemed to be most important for an effective in-house lawyer across all job levels align with previous years, with communication skills once more the clear leader. Adaptability and flexibility also feature particularly strongly, along with business acumen and an understanding of the business. However, there are differences in skills ranked by role, with business acumen and understanding rated as the top skill required for CLO/GCs, while communication skills rank highest for Senior Counsel and Legal Counsel.

Given that these attributes are eminently transferable, it is perhaps unsurprising to see a trend towards in-house legal staff moving into wider business roles. Almost 1-in-5 respondents (19%) are seeing an increase in the movement of in-house counsel in non-legal roles, slightly up on last year.

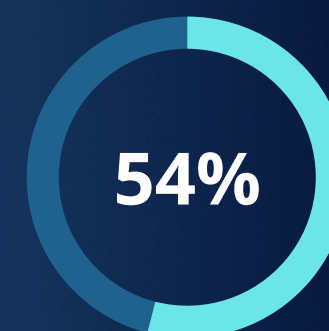
Most commonly, such moves have been into HR or Compliance roles. This increase in to business roles is concentrated in the commercial sector, where such moves are made in about a quarter of companies (Private 26%, Public 23%). There is also evidence of more moves into C-suite positions since we first reported in 2021, including CEO and COO roles.

## Most common non-legal business roles into which in-house counsel move:

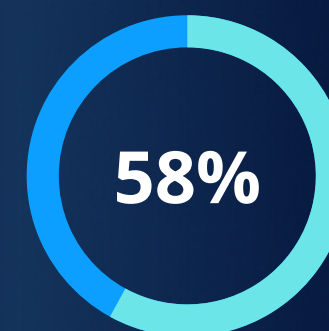
Consulting  
CEO  
risk  
development  
roles  
management  
compliance  
COO  
officers  
Director  
strategy  
Human Resources  
ESG  
Relations  
business  
HR  
legal  
privacy  
c-suite  
corporate

*In-house counsel continue to carry significant accountabilities beyond their legal responsibilities*

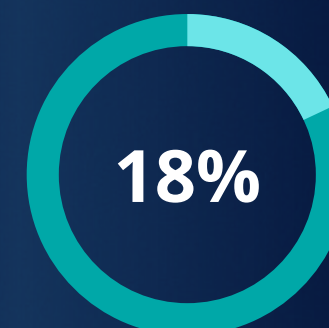
## Stress and anxiety levels amplified in more junior roles:



of CLOs/CGs reported increased levels



of director of legal services/legal manager reported increased levels



respondents seeing an increase in in-house counsel moving into non-legal business roles





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