

 [Click to Print](#) or Select 'Print' in your browser menu to print this document.

Page printed from: [The American Lawyer](#)

Greenspoon, Dickstein See Head Counts Rise and Slide

Brian Baxter, The Am Law Daily

October 14, 2015

With the end of each quarter comes [M&A league tables](#), [law firm merger metrics](#) and big-firm [leadership confidence surveys](#), as well as a look at the Am Law 200 firms that saw their attorney head counts change the most so far in 2015.

As we have done [twice before this year](#), The Am Law Daily crunched the numbers in ALM's RivalEdge database to determine which firms saw their lawyer count shrink and grow during the first three quarters of 2015. Seeking the most complete data set, we looked at head count data from Jan. 1, 2015, through Oct. 14 of this year, tossing out some outsized percentage changes because of incomplete information.

The focus on percentage changes means that smaller or midsize Am Law 200 firms for the most part dominate the list below. Overall head counts at global legal giants are less affected by the industry's constant migrations, while mergers and other combinations and tie-ups can [skew the numbers at some firms](#).

But head count remains a key metric for firms of all sizes—sibling publication The National Law Journal publishes a list of the [nation's largest 350 firms](#) each year—and coming off a year in which [many firms struggled to grow](#), it's worth noting those firms that have watched their payrolls expand and contract the most in 2015.

Largest Negative Percent Change in Lawyers

1. Irell & Manella (-27.0): A 30-lawyer team led by two top litigators [left the firm in January to form boutique Hueston Hennigan](#), a mass exodus that represented about a [quarter of Irell & Manella's total head count](#). The firm did make [some hires of its own](#) to fill the breach.
2. Dickstein Shapiro (-23.2): The Washington, D.C.-based firm hasn't been able to catch a break this year, [losing an insurance coverage group](#) to Los Angeles-based Liner, while two bankruptcy lawyers in New York [launched their own boutique](#). [Dickstein's head count issues](#) took another hit in May when federal prosecutors [indicted the now former co-head](#) of its public policy group.
3. Kasowitz, Benson, Torres & Friedman (-18.6): Despite reaping a [windfall from litigation](#) representing the Federal Housing Finance Agency, [Kasowitz Benson confirmed in March](#) that it would trim its litigation ranks because of a dearth of other big cases in the pipeline.
4. Kenyon & Kenyon (-16.4): The struggling New York-based IP boutique, which in September tapped a [new leader in the older brother](#) of late night talk show host Stephen Colbert, has watched a steady stream of partners head for the door this year.

5. Bracewell & Giuliani (-11.5): Having officially [adopted its current name](#) a decade ago, Bracewell & Giuliani is based in Texas, a legal market that [has come under pressure](#) because of the [entry of out-of-state firms](#) and a slumping oil and gas industry.

6. Robins Kaplan (-11.4): The Minneapolis-based firm, which opened [two new offices in the Dakotas this year](#) to serve Native American tribes, also shortened its shingle in January after [name partner Michael Ciresi split off](#) with several other lawyers to start his own firm.

7. Stevens & Lee (-11.2): The Pennsylvania-based regional firm saw [16 lawyers depart in a mass April exit](#) to form their own shop, called Saxton & Stump.

8. Katten Muchin Rosenman (-9.1): Forged through a [2002 merger](#), Katten has [dealt with departures before](#), but most of those who have left the firm this year came from the associate and counsel ranks.

Largest Positive Percent Change in Lawyers

1. Greenspoon Marder (+57.7): A new entrant to this year's [Am Law 200 list](#), the Fort Lauderdale-based firm [added a criminal practice](#) in August and [bolted on a Miami Beach-based boutique](#) in September. Three years ago, [Greenspoon Marder hired Joel Sanders](#), a former CFO at Dewey & Leboeuf currently [on trial in New York](#).

2. Fragomen, Del Rey, Bernsen & Loewy (+19.6): As goes the nation's immigration climate, [so goes Fragomen](#), which also happens to have one of the [highest big-firm ratios for female equity partners](#).

3. Dinsmore & Shohl (+15.0): The Cincinnati-based firm, [which merged with West Virginia's Huddleston Bolen](#) in January, [expanded again in September](#) by absorbing Detroit-based IP boutique Gifford, Krass, Sprinkle, Anderson & Citkowski.

4. Smith, Gambrell & Russell (+12.7): An Atlanta-based firm also new to our Second Hundred rankings, Smith Gambrell has continued making acquisitions in the [aftermath of a strong 2014](#).

5. Gordon Rees Scully Mansukhani (+12.3): [The Am Law Daily reported last year](#) on Gordon Rees' lengthier nameplate, and this week we [noted the firm's geographic expansion](#), one that will see it open offices in Ohio and West Virginia on Nov. 1.

6. Lane Powell (+11.5): A leading legal shop in the Pacific Northwest, Seattle-based Lane Powell lured a [venture capitalist back to the law](#) this summer in its [first year under new leadership](#).

7. Cozen O'Connor (+11.4): In June, Cozen added 58 lawyers to its ranks by closing on a [merger with Chicago's Meckler Bulger Tilson Marick & Pearson](#). Cozen also picked up a [high-profile state attorneys general practice](#) from Dickstein in May.

8. DLA Piper (+10.5): The global legal giant, which this week [announced new offices](#) in Casablanca and Johannesburg, [absorbed Canada's Davis in April](#). DLA Piper has also [reportedly not ruled out combining](#) with a domestic Chinese firm.