

Husch Blackwell Cut Number of Partners by Four Percent



HUSCH BLACKWELL

Summary: *Husch Blackwell will cut 40 lawyers from its firm before the end of the year as a number of partners retire or move on. No associates will be affected.*

Husch Blackwell announced Friday its intention to cut 40 lawyers from its team through retirement and layoffs. The Kansas City-based law firm has 18 offices throughout the United States.

Firm CEO Greg Smith and Chairman Maurice Watson said in a joint statement, "With retirements and other year-end transitions, approximately 40 attorneys, all partners or counsels, are expected to leave the firm. Such departures are offset, in part, by new attorney hires throughout the year, and our firm has a net increase of 12 attorneys for the 12-month period ending October 31, 2017. Given our firm's size and scale, these attorney transitions are expected and normal."

Husch Blackwell has offices in Austin, TX; Chattanooga, TN; Chicago, IL; Dallas, TX; Denver, CO; Houston, TX; Jefferson City, MO; Kansas City, MO; Lincoln, NE; Madison, WI; Milwaukee, WI; Omaha, NE; Phoenix, AZ; Springfield, MO; St. Louis, MO; Washington, D.C.; and Waukesha County, WI.

The law firm did not specify which offices will be affected. The reason for the reduction in staff numbers is to evaluate "whether the firm's services match trending market demands and client needs." The firm demoted 25 partners from equity status in 2012.

One recent hire, Mary Pat Carl, will be a partner starting November 27. She is a former lead homicide prosecutor for the St. Louis Circuit Attorney's Office, where she had been for 14 years. She will be part of Husch Blackwell's government compliance and investigations group.

Husch Blackwell is set to have a new CEO take over in February. Paul Eberle was elected by the firm in August, according to Am Law Daily. Current CEO Greg Smith will then become the firm's chairman. Eberle, who is not a lawyer, became one of the first nonlawyers to lead a law firm in 2009 when he became the CEO for Whyte Hirschboeck Dudek. The firm merged last year with Husch Blackwell, allowing Eberle to become the deputy CEO. The merger with Whyte Hirschboeck Dudek propelled the firm into the Am Law 100. The merger grew their revenue by 20 percent last year and increased their headcount to 612 lawyers. Partnership also grew by 30 percent last year, affecting profits per partner by a decrease of 8 percent since 2015. Revenue per lawyer also took a hit of 3 percent.

Another nonlawyer CEO was Scott Green of [Pepper Hamilton](#). He took on that role in 2012 but eventually left the firm to be the chief operating and financial officer at [Hogan Lovells](#). The Texas bar's ethics committee ruled in 2014 that law firms in the state cannot use the title "chief executive officer" for managers that are not lawyers because "officer" implies they have the power of control over lawyers, but in a sense do not.

Do you think Husch Blackwell is trying to reduce its costs by getting rid of those attorneys that cost a lot? Share your thoughts with us in the comments below.

To learn more about law firm layoffs, read these articles:

- [Dechert Layoffs: First-Year Associates Amongst Those Let Go](#)
- [K&L Gates Uses Layoffs to Reduce Costs](#)
- [5 Steps Lawyers Should Take When a Layoff is Imminent](#)

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